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SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 2004

U.S. readies major assault on Fallujah

Soldier killed; U.S. jets strike city
as Allawi warns 'window is closing'

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AP photos



Above: A U.S. Marine from the 1st Division checks ammunition Friday at a base outside Fallujah. More than 10,000 U.S. troops have taken positions around the rebel-controlled city. Top right: A legend for a map of Fallujah, composed of gravel, Legos and poker chips, is on display at a base outside the city. Bottom right: Marines perform maintenance on their vehicles in preparation of an assault on the city.

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

National park snowmobiles: The National Park Service released a final plan Thursday for snowmobile use in Wyoming's Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks allowing limited, guided snowmobile treks in the parks for the next three winters.

The plan, which was proposed earlier, would allow for up to 720 snowmobiles a day led by guides into Yellowstone and 140 snowmobiles in Grand Teton and on the John D. Rockefeller Jr. Memorial Parkway connecting the parks. Nearly all the snowmobiles would be required to meet new standards for noise and pollution.

Wild condor flight: A California condor chick born in the wild has become the first such bird to take flight in 22 years, wildlife officials said Thursday.

Hatched in April near Hopper Mountain National Wildlife Refuge, the condor took a flight of 30 feet in mid-October and soared 150 feet two weeks later. The last wild condor chick to fly in the wild was in 1982.

"The wild condor chick taking its first flight is a big step to getting back to a truly wild population," said Steve Thompson, regional operations manager for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Boston fan death: Civil rights advocates angry over the death of a student hit by a pepper-spray pellet are seeking at least a temporary ban on the Boston Police Department's use of so-called "less-lethal" weapons to control crowds.

The police commissioner last week created an independent commission to investigate the Oct. 21 death of Victoria Snellgrove and review weapons like the one believed to have caused the 21-year-old's death. Snellgrove was shot in the chest during a massive celebration outside Fenway Park after the Red Sox won the American League pennant.

Eric Rudolph trial: Lawyers for serial bombing suspect Eric Rudolph tried to show Thursday that federal agents — not Rudolph — may have spread traces of explosives from a deadly abortion clinic bombing in Alabama to his North Carolina home.

Prosecutors have said eyewitnesses and traces of explosives found in Rudolph's home, including on a towel and chair, link him to the 1998 Birmingham bombing that killed a police officer and critically injured a woman.

However, under defense questioning during an evidentiary hearing Thursday, agents Richard Strobel and Gregory P. Czarnopys of the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives both said they did not swab their hands to check for such traces before searching Rudolph's trailer.

Anthrax vaccine: The government said Thursday it is purchasing 75 million doses of a new generation anthrax vaccine under an \$87.5 million contract — the first awarded through a federal program to develop and stockpile antidotes to biological and chemical weapons.

The five-year contract with VaxGen Inc. will provide enough vaccine to treat roughly 25 million people. The company expects to begin delivery by 2006. According to the contract, the first 25 million vaccine doses would be delivered within two years and the balance within three years, said Lance K. Gordon, the company's president.

No-fly list suit: A Justice Department lawyer on Thursday asked a federal judge in Seattle to dismiss a lawsuit that alleges the government's handling of its "no-fly" list violates air travelers' rights.

The American Civil Liberties Union lawsuit says the government has put in place insufficient safeguards to ensure that people with names similar to those on the list aren't treated with suspicion because of mistaken identity.



Ivory Coast civil war: A pro-government "Jeune Patriote" militia supporter holds a sign in French which translates as "We are ready to fight the rebellion" at a demonstration Thursday in Abidjan, Ivory Coast. Government warplanes bombed the largest city in Ivory Coast's rebel-held north Thursday, relaunching fighting after more than a year in what a commander said was a major government drive to reunite the war-divided nation.

The seven plaintiffs say they have been repeatedly stopped at airports and questioned for as long as an hour before being allowed to board flights.

Mars rovers: As NASA's Mars rovers keep rolling past all expectations of their useful lives, scientists have a happy mystery: For some reason, one of the vehicles has actually gained power recently.

Opportunity recently experienced an unexplained rejuvenation from what can so far be described only by two or three significant "cleaning events," said Jim Erickson, the rover project manager at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif.

"Now we're assuming they're cleaning, but all we can really say is that overnight the solar panels produced between 2 and 5 percent additional power immediately," he said.

World

Indonesia terror trial: Alleged Southeast Asian extremist chief Abu Bakar Bashir on Thursday accused police of arresting him on orders of President Bush, and dismissed terror charges against him as "laughable."

In a rambling defense plea read to Jakarta, Indonesia, court, the 66-year-old cleric also attacked the secular government in the world's most populous Muslim nation, accusing Indonesia of ignoring the plight of Muslims killed by U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Bashir is accused of heading the al-Qaida-linked terror group Jemah Islamiyah, and of inciting his followers to take part in the 2002 Bali bombings and the J.W. Marriott Hotel attack last year in Jakarta. He faces the death penalty if convicted.

Sinai bomb suspects: Five Egyptians arrested in connection with last month's Sinai explosions have been charged with committing terrorist acts and premeditated murder, officials at the prosecutor's office said Friday.

The five were among eight Egyptians and a Palestinian implicated last month in the Oct. 7 bombings at Egyptian tourist resorts. Three car bombs exploded almost simultaneously outside the Tabla Hilton hotel, just yards from Egypt's border with Israel, and two tourist camps 35 miles further south.

The blasts killed 34 people, including Israelis, Egyptians, Israelis and Russians.

Iran nuclear denial: Iran's top leader on Friday insisted that his country was not seeking nuclear weapons because it had "devoted youth and a nation united" to rely on instead, saying U.S. accusations were aimed at preventing Iran's technological progress.

"They accuse us of seeking nuclear weapons. No sir. We are not thinking of building atomic weapons," Ayatollah Ali Khamenei told tens of thousands of worshippers in his prayer sermon.

"Our nuclear weapon is this nation, is our youth. A system that has no many devoted youth and a nation united doesn't need nuclear weapons," Khamenei said.

Iran insists its nuclear activities are peaceful and geared solely toward generating electricity. But Iran's vast oil reserves, contends it is running a covert nuclear weapons program.

Serb election boycotts: Top Belgrade officials will meet Friday to plot a strategy on Kosovo following a massive Serb boycott of the province's general election last month.

The meeting was called by conservative Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica and is expected to gather other government leaders and officials from Serbia's main political parties.

However, Serbia's pro-Western President Boris Tadic has said he would not attend, in a sign of a rift over Kosovo between him and Kostunica.

Less than 1 percent of Kosovo's Serbs cast ballots in the Oct. 23 provincial election, in a blow to efforts by U.N. officials running Kosovo to create a multiethnic society.

Russia school seizure: Russian prosecutors said Friday they would investigate reports that twice as many terrorists seized a Russian school two months ago as the government had claimed.

Prosecutors also charged a senior police officer with negligence in connection with the Sept. 1-3 seizure of the school in Beslan in the southern province of North Ossetia, which ended in a hail of gunfire and explosions, killing more than 330 hostages.

Russian officials had claimed that 32 raiders took part, and of those, 31 were killed and one captured.

But a special forces soldier, identified only as Vasily, told the newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* that he had personally seen 49 terrorists dead and three captured. The soldier also claimed that 13 more attackers had managed to escape, the newspaper reported Thursday.

Stories and photos from wire services



Bashir

Allawi: 'Window is closing' to avert assault

Three U.S. troops killed in fighting

BY TINI TRAN

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — U.S. jets struck Fallujah with five air raids in 12 hours, softening up the insurgent stronghold for an expected major assault. Guerrillas responded with a rocket attack Friday, killing a U.S. soldier and wounding seven others, the U.S. military said.

Iraq's interim prime minister, Ayad Allawi, warned that the "window is closing" for a peaceful settlement to avert an offensive on Fallujah, west of Baghdad. U.S. troops sealed off roads into the city overnight.

U.S. commanders said a combined U.S.-Iraqi force would carry out the attack on what is considered the insurgents' strongest bastion.

Prime Minister Ayad Allawi must give the green light for the operation — part of a campaign to uproot insurgents ahead of vital elections planned for late January.

The deadly rocket strike came a day after two American Marines were killed and four others were wounded Thursday in fighting west of Baghdad.

The rocket attack occurred about 1:20 p.m. Tuesday against a position outside Fallujah. Also on the outskirts of Fallujah, guerrillas attacked two new checkpoints set up by U.S. forces, prompting exchanges of fire that killed at least one attacker, the military said.

In another incident, mortar shells exploded on a small U.S. base at Saghlaiyah west of Fallujah, the military said. U.S. troops returned fire, killing an undetermined number of insurgents, the military said.

Elsewhere, three British soldiers were killed Thursday south of Baghdad and eight others were wounded when a suicide driver rammed his vehicle at a checkpoint.

An Iraqi translator also died in the attack. It was the single biggest loss of life for the British since August 2003 and came only days after British troops redeployed from the relative safety of the south to the base close to Baghdad in order to free up U.S. troops for a Fallujah offensive.

Ayad Allawi suggested Friday that the offensive could come soon.

"We intend to liberate the people and to bring the rule of law to Fallujah," Allawi told reporters in Brussels, where he was appealing to European nations to keep troops



American soldiers convoy toward the insurgent-held city of Fallujah as residents evacuate the city. In multiple airstrikes on Friday, U.S. warplanes struck several targets in Fallujah, including a system of barriers rigged with bombs in the southeastern part of the city. They also hit a command post, suspected fighting positions and a weapons cache, said Lt. Nathan Braden, of 1st Marine Division.

in Iraq and to accelerate training of Iraqi forces.

"The window really is closing for a peaceful settlement," he said.

"We have been asked by the people of Fallujah to help them liberate them from the terrorists and insurgents," he said. Allawi said most to the city's civilian population had left.

However, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan warned that the election could be undermined by a new campaign against Fallujah because of a possible backlash from the Sunni Muslim community.

In a letter dated Oct. 31, Annan told American, British and Iraqi leaders that the United Nations wants to help prepare for the elections but fears a rise in violence could disrupt the process.

"I have in mind not only the risk of insurgent violence, but also reports of major military offensives being planned by the multinational force in key localities such as Fallujah," Annan wrote in the letter obtained by The Associated Press.

U.S. airstrikes early Friday hit a system of barriers rigged with bombs in the southeastern part of Fallujah, a command post, suspected fighting positions and a weapons cache, said Lt. Nathan Braden of 1st Marine Division.

Explosions could be heard in the southern part of Fallujah on Friday afternoon.

Also Friday, U.S. Marines fired on a civilian vehicle that did not stop at a checkpoint in Fallujah, killing an Iraqi woman and wounding her husband, according to the U.S. military and witnesses.

The car didn't notice the checkpoint at the time, witnesses said.

"Marines fire upon vehicles only as a last resort when verbal and visual warnings to stop fail. Such was the case today," the Marines said in an e-mailed response.

Meanwhile, the Iraqi election commission said that Iraqis who live outside the country will be allowed to vote in the election, which is to be held by Jan. 31.

Commission spokesman Fareed Ayar said the government planned to establish voting centers in countries with large Iraqi populations.

Details of how many centers, where they would be located and which countries would be involved have not been finalized, he said.

Iraqi authorities had put together a team of Iraqi administrators to run Fallujah after the offensive, Marine Maj. Jim West said Thursday. West said \$75 million has been earmarked to repair the city.

The strategy is similar to one used when U.S. troops restored government authority in the Shiite holy city Najaf last August after weeks of fighting with militiamen.

The deteriorating security situation

prompted the humanitarian organization Medecins Sans Frontieres, or Doctors Without Borders, to announce it was closing its operations in Iraq. CARE International withdrew from the country after its national director, Margaret Hassan, was kidnapped last month.

An Iraqi known for cooperating with Americans was killed near Ramadi, police said. The assassins stopped a car carrying Sheikh Bezi Paykhan, ordered the driver to leave and pumped about 30 bullets into the sheik's body, police said.

The wave of violence in Iraq also has been marked by the kidnapping of more than 170 foreigners, more than 30 of them killed, since Saddam Hussein's regime fell in April 2003.

In other developments Friday: ■ Four buses carrying Shiite pilgrims to Karbala plunged into a river near Latifiyah in central Iraq, killing 18 people on board, when the drivers apparently failed to see that a bridge had been destroyed two days earlier by insurgents, said Dr. Dawood al-Tai of nearby Mahmudiya Hospital.

■ A private security company, Global Risk Strategies, said a British contractor was killed in a suicide car bombing at Baghdad airport Wednesday that also injured several Iraqi civilians.

■ In Muqadadiyah, north of Baghdad, a mortar shell targeting a police station fell short, killing two children in a nearby home, police said.

Military hospital in Iraq sets up morgue, doubles staff in preparation for assault

By JIM KRANE

The Associated Press

NEAR FALLUJAH, Iraq — The combat hospital on the chief U.S. base near Fallujah has set up a morgue and doubled medical staff and supplies in preparation for an expected stream of casualties from an anticipated assault on the insurgent stronghold.

"We've had 20 to 30 casualties on a given day here. We expect maybe double that on a serious day. And we can handle them," Capt. Eric Lovell, a U.S. Navy doctor, said at the base hospital, a concrete building announced by a sign saying "Cheaters of Death."

The hospital added a Marine

Mortuary Affairs team last month, a unit charged with identifying dead troops, cataloging their personal effects and preparing their bodies for the flight to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware in the United States.

The morgue team counts 16 reservists trained in handling corpses of U.S. troops as well as Iraqi civilians and fighters that arrive at the hospital here, said Commander Lach Noyes, a U.S. Navy surgeon. The morgue team also travels to bomb scenes to recover body parts and corpses that need to be extracted from vehicles.

In hospital parlance, those killed in action are known as "angels." In last weekend's suicide

bombing of a truckload of U.S. Marines traveling south of Fallujah, the eight killed and nine injured came to the hospital. "We took care of angels and wounded on that one," Noyes said.

The hospital's daily toll is grim. Patients arrive with devastating wounds. Common procedures include amputations or stabilizing broken bones or torn organs. The surgeons and staff say they cope, knowing the soldiers need them to be steady in the face of shocking carnage.

"The first patient I had was six hours after I got here," Lovell said. "His heart was out of his chest. I said 'Whoa, that's a shaker. Welcome to Fallujah.' But I'm more confident now."

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Thursday, Nov. 4, 2004, at least 1,123 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 862 died as a result of hostile action, the Defense Department said. The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is two higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated Thursday at 10 a.m. EST.

The British military has reported 73 deaths; Italy, 19; Poland, 13; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary

and Latvia have reported one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 985 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 753 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest deaths reported by the military:

■ None reported.

■ The latest identifications reported by the Defense Department:

■ Army Sgt. Charles J. Webb, 22, Hamilton, Ohio, killed Wednesday by an explosive in Baghdad, Iraq; assigned to the 82nd Engineer Battalion, 1st Infantry Division (Mechanized), Bamberg, Germany.

'Knock' missions help earn respect

BY JULIANA GITTLER

Stars and Stripes

MOSUL, Iraq — Before the first streaks of dawn break through the sky, teams of U.S. and Iraqi forces systematically trickle through a neighborhood on a "cordon-and-knock" mission.

They rap on each door, check inside for weapons or explosives and pass out leaflets asking for help finding terrorists. They're hoping to flush out lurking enemy forces, but a critical part of the mission is more proactive. It lets residents get to know coalition forces.

Unlike a raid, a "knock" operation is meant to stay tranquil. Soldiers don't break down doors; they work to earn the locals' respect.

"Rather than kick the door and make everybody upset, we knock and ask permission to come in," says Capt. Matthew McGrew, Headquarters and Headquarters Company commander and liaison with the Iraqi guardsmen. "That being said, we are checking every house."

The missions also are meant bolster support for the burgeoning Iraqi National Guard. An Iraqi guardsman will be the first person the homeowners see when they open their doors.

"The key is you want to get that Iraqi face forward," Lt. Col. Erik Kurilla, commander of the 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade (Stryker Brigade Combat Team), 25th Infantry Division (Light), tells the unit leaders before they move out for a recent mission.

Shortly after 4 a.m., soldiers load into their Strykers and roll across the city to the targeted

neighborhood. One group secures a perimeter around the affluent neighborhood. Another starts working its way from door to door.

Insurgents have launched mortars from the neighborhood before, gunning for Iraqi guardsmen. Locals tell the U.S. soldiers that the insurgents drive in, launch the mortars, then scatter.

Despite the Army's goal of making friends in the neighborhood, the residents are uneasy about the soldiers' early morning visit. But they seem eager to keep enemy forces out. As soldiers leave one home, a woman and several children huddled in a side room offer a thumbs up and a smile.

"I think they're so used to the American and coalition presence," Kurilla says. "They're used to the knock at the door."

The three-hour mission turns out peaceful. There is no small-arms fire or explosives. Soldiers find some grenades, make one arrest and begin identifying residents who might offer future intelligence.

"Every once in a while someone will give us a good lead," McGrew says.

It's also another step in preparing Iraqi forces for the United States' eventual departure. But the Iraqi guardsmen still have plenty of training to do. Insurgents are already targeting them, even though the guardsmen wear scarves to hide their identities. For two nights before the cordon and knock, ING soldiers were injured engaging the enemy.

"They're threatening their families, but they still come back to work," McGrew says. "They want to do their jobs."

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Above: Lt. Col. Erik Kurilla, right, speaks to the resident of a house during a cordon-and-knock mission in Mosul, Iraq. For the mission, U.S. and Iraqi forces systematically check out a neighborhood looking for enemy forces or illegal weapons, but do so without building animosity.

"Rather than kick the door and make everybody upset, we knock and ask permission to come in," says Capt. Matthew McGrew.

Left: An Iraqi National Guard soldier speaks to a resident in his home during an early-morning mission. The first face a resident sees during a cordon-and-knock mission is always an Iraqi National Guard soldier. Facing insurgents who are increasingly targeting Iraqi forces, the Iraqi soldiers wear scarves to conceal their identity.

PHOTOS BY JULIANA GITTLER
Stars and Stripes



Grace Ivy Tarongoy begged kidnappers in Iraq to release her husband, Filipino accountant Robert Tarongoy. He was one of two hostages reportedly released Friday.

Al-Jazeera: Captors release two hostages

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — Arabic television station Al-Jazeera said Friday a Filipino and a Nepalese kidnapper earlier in the week have been released by their captors. Nepalese officials confirmed the report but the Filipinos said they could not.

The Doha, Qatar-based satellite network did not give a source for its information, saying the release of the two hostages comes after the wife of one hostage appealed to kidnappers for his release on the occasion of holy Ramadan.

Earlier in the day, Nepal's foreign minister announced the release of Dewardi, 27, who had been abducted along with Filipino accountant Robert Tarongoy, an unidentified American col-

league and three other Iraqis by armed gunmen from their compound in Baghdad on Monday.

Minister Prakash Sharan Mahat said Dewari's Saudi employer had assured him that Dewari was safe and had been taken to the airport.

It was unclear when he was released and who his captors were.

All six men had worked for the Saudi Arabian Trading and Construction Co. a Riyadh-based company that provided catering and foodstuffs to the Iraqi army and others. Two of the Iraqi guards have already been released.

There have been no claims of responsibility and no demands made for the remaining hostages' release.

Government officials in Manila said Friday they have no information about Tarongoy being freed and are checking on the reports.

Earlier in the day, Tarongoy's wife in Manila made a plea for his release and reminded his abductors that there are no longer any Filipino troops in the war-torn nation.

"Robert is a good man with deep respect for all Muslims," said Ivy Tarongoy. "My country, the Philippines, has no troops in Iraq. My husband and I wish only the best for the Iraqi people."

"I ask that he be freed as a symbol of goodwill and friendship between the peoples of Iraq and the Philippines," she told The Associated Press. "I do not see any more

possible grievances that the kidnappers may have against the Philippine government."

It was the second abduction of a Filipino worker in Iraq. More than 4,000 Filipinos work in U.S. military camps across Iraq, mostly as maintenance workers and cooks because of the high wages.

The Philippines have announced a ban on work in Iraq, but about 2,000 Filipinos have remained since the ban was imposed.

In July, insurgents snatched truck driver Angelo dela Cruz and persuaded Manila to recall its small peacekeeping force early in exchange for his life. The move was sharply criticized by Washington and its allies but hailed in the Philippines.



PHOTOS BY CHARLIE COON/Stars and Stripes

Above: Petty Officer 1st Class Roy Sedano of Chula Vista, Calif., center, climbs out of the water at the Port of Djibouti on Wednesday after inspecting underwater for bombs prior to the arrival of an Army ship. Right: Sgt. Michael Taman of Mangilao, Guam, and the Guam Army National Guard keeps watch as an Army ship pulls into port Wednesday.



‘There are eyes out there’

Port of Djibouti may look peaceful, but safety requires diligence

BY CHARLIE COON
Stars and Stripes

PORT OF DJIBOUTI, Djibouti — The port looked peaceful enough.

Waves washed the rocks. Crabs climbed out of the water to sun themselves. But Staff Sgt. Joe Mendiola wasn't taken in by the mellowness.

"Anywhere you go on this side of the world, if you leave your guard down, you're going to get hurt," said Mendiola, of the Guam Army National Guard. "It may look peaceful, but there are eyes out there."

Mendiola was one of 44 troops pulling security Wednesday at the Port of Djibouti for the arrival of a U.S. military ship. The ship, an Army TSV-1X, would be carrying containers of supplies — mostly food — for the troops based at nearby Camp Lemonnier.

Djibouti is not the most violent outpost in

the war against terror: Not a single shot has been fired in anger here since the U.S. military took over operation of the former French base in May 2003.

But since Djibouti is located 17 miles across the strait from the Arabian Peninsula and next to tempestuous nations such as Somalia and Sudan, why take chances?

First Lt. Spencer Templeton of Norfolk, Va., a force-protection officer for Combined Joint Task Force — Horn of Africa, said troops from all four service branches participated in this day's port security, along with Djiboutian port security officers.

They arrived at about 2:30 p.m., 2½ hours before the scheduled arrival of the ship. Some of the troops combed the road-side and nearby buildings for bombs and searched passing vehicles.

"When you're searching for [improvised explosive devices], you're looking for something that doesn't belong," Templeton said.

Bosco was on duty, too.

After troops made visual inspections for explosives, Bosco, a 7-year-old Belgian Malinois, went sniffing around for anything the troops might have missed, as well as into tight spaces the troops couldn't reach.

Bosco was helped by Marine Cpl. Terry Donaldson of Marine Central Command, who liked his job.

"On one hand, most Marines are very best friends with other Marines," Donaldson said, a Columbus, Ohio native. "I'm very best friends with my dog."

"A lot of [troops] just like seeing a dog, because they might be missing their dog back home."

Next to the huge concrete slab to which the ship would be moored, Chief Petty Officer Daniel Trout and Petty Officer 1st Class Roy Sedano searched underwater for anything that wasn't quite right.

The water, they said, was muddy with very low visibility.

"We had to do a lot of work with our hands," said Trout, a member of Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal Detachment 18 of Sigonella, Sicily.

"It takes good diver discipline to not hit the bottom and kick up more silt," the West Palm Beach, Fla., native said.

About 1,500 U.S. troops are stationed in and around Djibouti, a small country in eastern Africa. French, German, Romanian and other troops help patrol the strategic sea lane.

That was fine with Said Haussein, the port-protection director for the Djiboutian navy.

"We feel very good about it," Haussein said. "We want to help them, and they are very welcome in our country."

"We want to be a commercial port. We want our friends to come here. We want to protect it."

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Mom's letter to Bush describes loyalty, loss

BY ROBERT BURNS
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — As the wife of a 25-year Air Force veteran, Debra Bascom has long dreaded the day that word would arrive on her doorstep that her husband had died on a distant battlefield.

"It never occurred to me that such an incident would occur for my son instead," she wrote in a letter this week to President Bush describing the pain of losing her oldest son, Marine Corps Sgt. Douglas E. Bascom, 25, of Colorado Springs, Colo. He was killed by insurgents in western Iraq on Oct. 20.

Bascom is one of more than 1,100 American troops who have died in the Iraq conflict, but the first from a rarely mobilized sector of the military known as the Individual Ready Reserve.

Hundreds of the Army's Indi-

vidual Ready Reserve have failed to report for duty on time since the Army began sending out mobilization orders to individual reservists last summer, but Debra Bascom said her son never hesitated when the Marine Corps called last April with his orders.

"He wanted to go to Iraq and fight and serve," she said in a telephone interview Tuesday.

Individual Ready Reserve members are people who were honorably discharged after finishing their active-duty service, usually four to six years, but remained in the ready reserve for the rest of the eight-year commitment they made when they joined the Army. They are separate from the reserve troops who are more routinely mobilized — the National Guard and Reserve.

Bascom joined the Marines at age 19 and spent four years on active duty. Once he was out of uni-

form he began to feel out of place, knowing that thousands of Marines were fighting in Iraq.

"He was a Marine," his mother said. "He told me that if you're a Marine you protect your own, you protect their back, you fight. You don't stay home." When the Iraq war started in March 2003, Bascom's parents encouraged him to get out of the Marines and avoid the risk of combat.

"He did get out, but it bothered him," Debra said. "He hadn't done what he felt was the right thing. So when he got back in he told me, 'Mom, I have to go. I'll be careful, but I have to go because I'm a Marine.'"

Leaving his job at a savings and loan, Bascom found himself in Iraq in early September, assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment. On Oct. 17, he called home to tell his parents that he'd been awarded a Purple Heart for

a flesh wound he suffered about two weeks earlier when a bullet grazed his arm.

Three days later he was killed, apparently near the city of Ramadid, a stronghold of the insurgency and one of the most dangerous places in Iraq for U.S. troops. Details are still sketchy, but apparently shrapnel from a bomb or grenade penetrated behind his left ear, killing him instantly.

In her letter to Bush, Debra Bascom said she supports the president's approach to fighting terrorism.

"I believe my son died for a cause that is essential to the welfare of our world," she wrote.

She told the president that two days after the family was notified of Douglas's death, an e-mail from him arrived "telling us how happy he was to be serving" and how he looked forward to returning home. He also mentioned that



Sgt. Douglas E. Bascom

he'd written letters still winding their way to Colorado.

"This is a mixed blessing," she told Bush. "How does one endure the loss of a loved one as messages of life and the future continue to arrive in the mail?"

U.S. military gives details of abuses at Guantanamo

BY PAISLEY DODDS

The Associated Press

GUANTANAMO BAY NAVAL BASE, Cuba — A detainee was forced to kneel so many times he was bruised, a barber gave reverse mohawks and a female interrogator ran her fingers through a prisoner's hair and sat in his lap, the U.S. government says in the most detailed accounting of eight abuse cases at its Guantanamo Bay prison for terror suspects.

Those responsible for the abuse have been demoted, reprimanded or sent for more training, according to an 800-word U.S. military response to a written query from The Associated Press.

Allegations of mistreatment at Guantanamo, where 550 terror suspects have been held for nearly three years, surfaced after the abuse scandal broke last year at the U.S.-run Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, where pictures showed beatings and sexual humiliation of Iraqi prisoners.

The details of abuse at Guantanamo come as lawyers for several prisoners challenge evidence presented by the government, saying some could have been obtained by force.

Only four prisoners have been formally charged at Guantanamo, where most are held without charge or access to lawyers. The military has reported 34 suicide attempts among detainees, though none

has been reported since January. Guantanamo's new commander says lessons have been learned from past abuse cases and troops are treating detainees humanely with a rigorous system of checks and balances.

"They've not been mistreated, they've not been tortured in any respect," Army Brig. Gen. Jay Hood said in an interview Wednesday.

Human rights monitors are not convinced.

"We're confident that there's more information out there that hasn't been released," said James Jaffer of the American Civil Liberties Union, which has obtained nearly 6,000 documents about procedures at U.S.-run prisons. He was in Guantanamo to observe pretrial hearings.

Maj. Gen. Geoffrey Miller, now in charge of U.S.-run prisons in Iraq, commanded the Guantanamo prison from November 2002 to March 2004 with a mandate to get better intelligence. Most abuses reported in August by James R. Schlesinger, who headed a U.S. Congressional committee to investigate abuses in Iraq, Afghanistan and Guantanamo, occurred under Miller's watch. The Department of Defense, responding to an AP query made nearly two months ago, said this week provided details of the eight Guantanamo abuse cases Schlesinger cited. No names were given.

In one case, a female interrogator used handcuffs attached to the floor as used on detainees during interrogations at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base prison.

gator took off her uniform top to expose her T-shirt to a detainee, ran her fingers through his hair and climbed on his lap in April 2003. A supervisor monitoring the session terminated it, and the woman was reprimanded and sent for more training, the military said.

The same month, an interrogator told military police to repeatedly bring a detainee from a standing to kneeling position, so much that his knees were bruised, the government said. The interrogator got a written reprimand and Miller reportedly stopped use of that technique.

Also that month, a guard was charged with dereliction of duty and assault after a detainee assaulted another guard. After the detainee was subdued, the guard punched the prisoner with his fist. He was demoted.

In a separate case, a guard was charged with assault after he sprayed a detainee with a hose when the prisoner allegedly tried to throw water from his toilet at him in September 2002. The guard was reduced in rank and reassigned.

In March 2003, a military policeman used pepper spray on a detainee, and another was charged with throwing unidentified liquid on an officer. The policeman was acquitted by a court martial.

Incidents this year include a military policeman who squirted a detainee with water in February, and a camp barber who gave two "unusual haircuts." The haircuts were reverse mohawks, according to a government official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The barber gave the cuts to frustrate detainee efforts to wear their hair the same way to demonstrate unity, the government said. The barber and his company were reprimanded.



AP photos

A detainee washes himself before praying inside his cell in Camp Delta at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in Cuba in June. Allegations of abuse at Guantanamo — where 550 terror suspects have been held for nearly three years — surfaced after the scandal broke last year at the U.S.-run Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

Air Force Lt. Col. Sharon Shaffer, defense attorney for a Guantanamo prisoner, announced Thursday that she would file a petition in federal court challenging her client's detention and alleging systematic abuse at the prison. She represents Ibrahlim Ahmed Mahmoud al-Qos of Sudan, an alleged al-Qaida paymaster whose conspiracy trial is scheduled for February.

"The abuse allegations at Guantanamo are a matter of growing concern," Shaffer said. "He was constantly being told he would be taken to Egypt to be interrogated, where many of the detainees believed they would be killed. And he was forced to sit for hours in the freezing cold."

At least one military insider at Guantanamo has gone public with allegations of abuse — a military police officer who was injured after going undercover as a detainee.

National Guardsman Sean Baker said the attack occurred in November 2002, the month after Miller arrived in Guantanamo,

when he was told to put on an orange detainee jumpsuit, get in a cell and wait for an Initial Response Force. The team used to subdue misbehaving detainees.

From under the bunk, Baker heard the extraction team come in, he said in his latest comments during a CBS television program aired Wednesday.

"My face was down. And of course, they're pushing it down against the steel floor, you know, my right temple, pushing it down against the floor," Baker told CBS.

The incident was purportedly recorded, one of some 500 hours of tapes that the military has refused to publicly release.

Baker said he tried to tell his attackers he was a soldier but they repeatedly slammed him head against the floor. Baker was airlifted to a naval hospital in Virginia where doctors said he suffered a brain injury. He has been plagued by seizures since, he said.

Shooting of injured Iraqi stirs controversy

BY EDMUND SANDERS

Los Angeles Times

BAGHDAD — As a U.S. Army patrol rolled into Sadr City one night in August, soldiers received a tip that militants in dump trucks were planting roadside bombs.

American troops had been clashing regularly with Al Mahdi militiamen in the restive Baghdad slum. So when Staff Sgt. Cardenas Alban of Carson, Calif., saw an object fall from a garbage truck in the distance, his company took positions around the vehicle and unleashed a barrage of fire from rifles and a 25-millimeter cannon atop a Bradley fighting vehicle. The truck exploded in flames.

As soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment approached the burning vehicle, they did not find insurgents. The victims were mainly teenagers, hired to work the late shift picking up trash for about \$5 a night, witnesses said.

Medics scrambled to treat the half a dozen people strewn around the scene. A dispute broke out among a handful of soldiers standing over one severely wounded young man who

was moaning in pain. An unwounded Iraqi claiming to be a relative of the victim pleaded in broken English for soldiers to help him.

But to the horror of bystanders, Alban, 29, a boyish-faced sergeant who joined the Army in 1997, retrieved an M-231 assault rifle and fired into the wounded man's body. Seconds later, another soldier, Staff Sgt. Johnny Horne Jr., 30, of Winston-Salem, N.C., grabbed an M-16 rifle and also shot the victim.

The killing might have been forgotten except for a U.S. soldier who days later slipped an anonymous note under the door of the unit's commander, Capt. Robert Humphries, warning that "soldiers had committed serious crimes that needed to be looked at."

U.S. officials have since characterized the shooting as a "merry killing," citing statements by Alban and Horne that they shot the wounded Iraqi "to put him out of his misery." Military attorneys, however, are calling it premeditated murder and have charged the two sergeants, saying the victim's suffering was no excuse for the soldiers' actions.

"I have no doubt that's why they did it," said Capt. John Maloney, one of the military attor-

neys prosecuting the case. "But it still constitutes murder."

Military attorneys in Baghdad said they were unaware of any legal precedent justifying "merry killing" in a war zone, though such circumstances could be considered during sentencing.

Iraqis who witnessed the Aug. 18 shooting said that rather than provide medical help to an injured civilian, the soldiers treated the Iraqi as if he were an animal struck by a car.

"We are not sheep," said Emad Raheem, 40, who said he was the driver of the dump truck, "We are human beings."

Iraqis were killed in the attack, including the one who was shot, military officials said. Eight others were wounded.

Alban and Horne — both on their second tour in Iraq — and their attorneys declined to comment. In statements to military investigators, both acknowledged shooting the Iraqi but have not entered formal pleas. They are facing Article 32 hearings in Baghdad, which will determine whether there is enough evidence to begin court-martial proceedings. If convicted, the soldiers could receive the death penalty.

Gas pipeline attacked

KIRKUK, Iraq — Saboteurs set off an explosion Friday damaging a gas pipeline in northern Iraq, police and oil officials said.

Police Col. Mohammed Ahmed said the blast hit a pipeline that connects the Baba Gurbul fields near the northern city of Kirkuk with the North Gas Company, affiliated with the state-owned North Oil Co.

A North Oil Co. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the pipeline was expected to be repaired within three days.

The pipeline's damage is likely to affect several power stations, including the Beiji power station, but it wasn't immediately clear by how much, the official said.

Insurgents frequently target the country's gas and oil infrastructure, which provides much needed revenue to reconstruction efforts in Iraq.

From The Associated Press

Card helps veterans protect personal info

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs has designed a new identity card for veterans that will safeguard confidential information.

"The new identification card ensures veterans' personal information is protected," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi, in a Thursday news release.

The card, formally known as the Veterans Identity Card, will have the veteran's photo on the front and identify him or her as enrolled in the VA's health care system.

Veterans should request the new card at their local medical center. Processing will take five to seven days once eligibility is verified. VA hopes to complete the conversion to the new, safer card by mid-November. The existing cards will remain valid until veterans receive their new cards.

Veterans traveling to the United States from overseas will be issued the cards when they visit a VA facility, VA spokesman Phil Budahn told Stars and Stripes. "Those vets won't be barred from getting treated because they don't

have cards," he said.

Encrypted on a magnetic tape on the back of the card will be the veteran's Social Security number, date of birth and a control number. The magnetic strip also records whether the veteran has a service-connected disability.

Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes in the nation. The Federal Trade Commission lists identity theft as the No. 1 fraud reported by consumers in 2003.

Requests from veterans and their congressional representatives were instrumental in bringing about these latest changes.

Personal information will be encrypted on a magnetic strip on the back of the card, along with health information.

Army increases reward for clues in '01 murder case

BY JESSICA INIGO

Stars and Stripes

Army investigators hoping to get someone to talk about the murder of a soldier three years ago have increased the reward to \$75,000.

The Army Criminal Investigation Command, known as CID, has not charged anyone and will not release whether there are any suspects in the slaying of Pfc. Amanda Gonzales, a 19-year-old Texan found dead Nov. 5, 2001, in her barracks room in Hanau, Germany.

Investigators ruled the death a homicide by asphyxiation, CID officials said.

Shortly after Gonzales' death, the CID offered a \$20,000 reward for information in the case. It boosted the reward in mid-2003 to \$50,000. Now, investigators issued an Army-wide release of the latest increase to motivate anyone with information to come forward.

"We want to speak with anyone who may have information — in Germany or anywhere else in the world," CID spokesman Chris Grey, based in Fort Belvoir, Va., wrote in an e-mail to Stars and Stripes.

"The reward was increased by CID because we are determined to bring whomever is responsible for the death of this soldier to justice... We are reaching out to the community at large to encourage anyone who may have information, no matter how insignificant it may seem, to come forward and do

the right thing."

Gonzales, a cook assigned to Headquarters Supply Company of the 127th Aviation Support Battalion on Fliegerhorst Casern, was four months pregnant at the time of her death.

Grey said during a phone interview that though it has been three years, death investigations take time and there still is hope of finding Gonzales' killer.

"We want to solve this murder... Someone somewhere knows something that can help us put the pieces of this puzzle together."

Grey said there has continually been a special agent assigned to the Gonzales case and that CID has been working with the FBI and other investigative firms to solve the death.

In earlier Stars and Stripes reports, Gonzales' father, Santos "T.C." Gonzales, said the Army kept four soldiers from leaving Hanau as part of the investigation. Later, an agent told him the suspects were released and had gone back to the States.

Last year, Stars and Stripes reported that many friends and family members had given up hope that the CID was still looking for the murderer.

However, Grey insists that CID is continuing the search and does care about finding out who killed Gonzales.

"We take pride in solving crimes," Grey said from his Virginia office.

Anyone with information on the case can call the Hanau CID office at DSN 323-2303 or 323-2863, or civilian (+49) (0)6181-180-2303 or (0)6181-180-2863. Also, tips can be e-mailed to CID at crime.tips@belvoir.army.mil.

E-mail Jessica Inigo at: inigoj@mail.estripes.osd.mil



Gonzales

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Ballot counting continues

Election officials make sure absentee votes are included

BY SANDRA JONTZ

Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — It is unfathomable to Kevin Kennedy, executive director for Wisconsin's State Board of Elections, that there are voters who think their absentee ballots aren't counted.

"The idea boggles my mind... It's one of those election myths out there," he said.

Joe Kaneffeld, state election director for Arizona, shared his disbelief.

"I don't know where people get that. I'm not sure people that started."

All votes are counted, whether cast at the polls or in absentia, said election officials from a dozen states interviewed since Tuesday's election. That is, of course, if the ballots arrived on time and met all legal requirements.

Yet rumors persist that absentee ballots are counted only in hotly contested races, when results are close or in the event of a recount.

Not true, said Judy Wagon, a staff member in the office of Secretary of State in Alabama. There, for example, absentee ballot tallies are listed as separate precincts.

And they're counted, even if one candidate has conceded, all officials said.

"The law says they must be counted, no matter what. Every vote counts," Wagon said. "The statistics are important and it matters to everyone. It matters to the winner and it matters to the loser."

And they matter for all of the

The inclusion put the Republican incumbent ahead in the final tally by 30 votes, Perosino said.

He doesn't know why the ballots weren't counted the first go-around. "Someone just missed them," he said.

And yet, possibly thousands of ballots from military and civilian voters mailed Election Day won't end up in the counted statistical columns because they will fail to meet deadline requirements.

Those deadlines vary by state. Some require ballots be in precinct offices and polling stations by Election Day, others only that they be postmarked by Election Day.

The Defense Department should now focus on improving future methods to avoid what appears to be a logistical mailing snag that delayed getting ballots out, said Peter Feaver, professor of political science at Duke University in Durham, N.C.

"I am not sure DOD can do anything unless they allow electronic voting, and there, too, they are going to have challenges," he said.

In February, the Pentagon scrapped a pilot program that would have facilitated Internet

"The law says they must be counted, no matter what. Every vote counts."

Judy Wagon

Alabama election official

political races.

In 2000, absentee ballots received the outcome of a local Connecticut election.

Democratic challenger Jonathan Harris was thought to have beaten the incumbent, Republican Bob Farr, by 23 votes for the West Hartford seat in that state's House of Representatives, according to Larry Perosino, spokesman for the Office of the Secretary of State.

Then, someone noticed a stack of absentee ballots inadvertently was not counted.



A group of U.S. soldiers watch a TV broadcast of the presidential election at U.S. Eagle Base near Tuzla, Sarajevo, on Wednesday. Some 900 U.S. troops serving as part of the NATO-led peacekeeping mission in Bosnia had the chance to cast absentee ballots, and U.S. election officials say they are making sure all those votes are counted.

voting for up to 100,000 overseas U.S. citizens amid criticism that programs could not guarantee a secure and tamper-proof system.

However, Congress tasked the Pentagon through the 2005 Defense Authorization Act to continue studying the issue via a program called Remote Internet Voting System Standards, said Lt. Col. Ellen Krenke, a department spokeswoman. No time line is given.

Although final numbers won't be available for about three months, voter turnout in Europe and the Middle East appears lower than in the past. As of Election Day, 88,788 ballots were mailed from APO and FPO addresses in Europe, and 48,935 ballots were mailed from Central Command's theater of operations by Oct. 26, Pacific Command was not able to supply any numbers.

E-mail Sandra Jontz at: jontz@stripes.odm.mil

MILITARY UPDATE

Tom Philpott

Tricare completes transition

Though surprise transition problems frustrated some beneficiaries, Tricare this month completed a major shift, to larger regions and performance-based contracts, to improve customer service and access to care for 9.1 million beneficiaries.

The Defense Department announced two years ago that Tricare would consolidate 12 regions into three, simplify support contracts, and impose tougher standards on contractors. In announcing phone calls and setting appointments, to making physician referrals and paying claims.

On Tuesday, Dr. William Winklerwerder, assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, declared the transition complete as Humana Military Health Services Inc., of Louisville, Ky., accepted beneficiaries from the final states to join the new South Region.

The new North Region, run by Health Net Federal Services Inc., of Sacramento, Calif., was completed Sept. 1. The West Region began full contractors Oct. 1 with the TriWest Healthcare Alliance Corp., of Phoenix providing health services and managerial support.

The contracts were awarded in August 2003. They direct no change to benefits, patient costs or the enrollment process. Still, by last summer, both contractors and beneficiaries faced unexpected problems.

In an interview, David J. McIntyre Jr., president and CEO of TriWest, discussed the challenges that began to surface last spring, at least in the West Region. TriWest's five-year, \$10.5 billion contract is to cover 2.7 million beneficiaries across 21 states, including 16 states of the former "Central Region" that TriWest was servicing under its earlier contract.

An early priority for the new region, said McIntyre, was re-signing at least 85 percent of physicians in the Tricare network for five Pacific coast states previously managed under a contract with Health Net. The first of these states to join the region would be Oregon and Washington on June 1.

When not enough providers were signed as the date approached, TriWest sought authority from the government to roll the old physician networks into the new region for 90 days to protect beneficiaries. When that idea was rejected, TriWest was forced to send letters to 43,000 beneficiaries advising them that they might need new doctors by June. The letter, which many patients apparently shared with their physicians, produced a wave of new contracts. But 16,600 beneficiaries had to change doctors.

In July, California, Hawaii and Alaska came into the region, and TriWest "got absolutely crushed" with phone calls, said McIntyre. Some of the unexpected volume

came from mobilized Reserve and National Guard members whose families are less familiar with Tricare.

"Our job is to make sure they get answers," and timely care, said McIntyre. "It's not to say, 'Hey, we'll ship you a manual. You figure it and call us if you have any questions.'"

But the typical call from a reserve family lasts five to seven minutes, said McIntyre, far less than other callers. This extends wait times for other callers. The new contracts specify that beneficiary calls are to be answered in 30 seconds for TriWest get dinged financially. At one point in July, the average wait exceeded 20 minutes.

Number and length of calls weren't the only problem. TriWest was the only Tricare contractor to structure its communication system around new technology, the Voice-Over Internet Protocol. VoIP allows both phone calls and e-mail to be carried simultaneously over the same lines. But in this case, McIntyre said, system designers underestimated the capacity of those lines to handle six large customer contact centers and 90 smaller offices across the region.

"Within three weeks we had our key lines tripped," McIntyre said. By the middle of August, the issue of lost calls and long wait times was resolved.

To comment, write Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centerville, Va. 20120-1111. E-mail: mupdate@stripes.odm.mil or visit www.militaryupdate.com



MICHAEL ABRAMS/Stars and Stripes

Tessa Pouliot, second from left, receives over her mother, Carol, to David Caraway during a Defense of Freedom Medal ceremony at Panzer Casern in Kaiserslautern, Germany, on Friday.

2 hit in Kuwait attack awarded civilian medal

Stars and Stripes

Two military contractors, who were attacked in Kuwait two months before the war in Iraq began, were awarded the civilian equivalent of the Purple Heart at a ceremony Friday in Vogelweh, Germany.

David Caraway and Mike Pouliot were working in Kuwait City for Tapestry Solutions Inc., a computer software firm, when their vehicle was ambushed a few miles from Camp Doha.

Pouliot, vice president of the firm, was killed in the attack. Car-

away was shot six times in the arm, chest and leg, but survived.

Maj. Bennie Williams, commander of the 21st Theater Support Command, presented the Defense of Freedom Medals to Caraway and to Pouliot's family at a 3 p.m. ceremony.

The medal was created to honor Pentagon employees who were killed or injured during the Sept. 11 attacks, according to a 21st TSC news release. The medal may be awarded to non-Defense employees, to include contractors based on their involvement with DOD activities, the release stated.

IN THE STATES

Bush wins Iowa, bringing total to 286

Democratic Sen. John Kerry earns 252 Electoral College votes

BY MIKE GLOVER
The Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa — President Bush won Iowa on Friday, finishing the campaign with wins in all three of the states that were still up in the air on election night.

The last result came in the state that started the election year with its party caucuses back in January. Although Democratic Sen. John Kerry already had conceded the race for the White House on Wednesday, the counting of absentee ballots continued in Iowa.

By Friday, Bush had 745,986 votes and Kerry had 732,764 with the number of outstanding ballots too few to change the outcome.

Long after the polls closed on Tuesday, Bush won Ohio, which gave him the 270 electoral votes necessary for a second term, and then he won New Mexico.

With Iowa decided on Friday, Bush finished with 286 electoral votes and Kerry 252.

In 2000, Democrat Al Gore won Iowa and New Mexico. The only Republican-to-Democratic switch this year was New Hampshire.

The Democrats' defeat in Iowa reflects a larger problem for them in the Midwest and across the political map.

Along with Wisconsin and Minnesota, Iowa and its seven electoral votes are part of the once-Democratic Upper Midwest that is growing more conservative with each presidential election.

Kerry won Minnesota by 3 percentage points, Wisconsin by a single point.

In addition, Michigan and Pennsylvania went Democratic by 3 per-



President Bush waves as he made his way through the crowd following a campaign rally, in Des Moines, Iowa, Monday. Bush won Iowa, one of the states that was still undecided, on Friday.

centage points or less and Bush won Ohio despite its economic miseries.

Democrats hope to cultivate the Southwest as a fertile substitute for Midwest losses, but Bush narrowed Democratic advantages among Hispanics in the region.

So GOP red states dominated the Electoral College map, with dashes of blue saved for both coasts and the shifting Midwest.

Kerry began campaigning in Iowa nearly three years ago. His surprising win in the Jan. 19 caucuses over a slate of eight other candidates gave him the momentum to claim the Democratic nomination.

In Iowa, absentee ballots had to be postmarked by Nov. 1, and those received by county auditors up until noon Monday can be counted.

Special precinct boards also have been reviewing provisional ballots that were cast. The state will not certify its results until Nov. 29.

Iowa Secretary of State Chet Culver had asked the public for patience while the state pursued its vote-counting process, which has been in place for 30 years.

Both the Bush and Kerry campaigns had worked hard to capture Iowa's electoral votes, with a steady stream of visitors in the weeks leading up to Election Day.

Before this year, the last Republican to carry Iowa was Ronald Reagan in 1984.

Ohio voting machine error gave president extra votes

The Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — An error with an electronic voting system gave President Bush 3,893 extra votes in suburban Columbus, elections officials said.

Franklin County's unofficial results had Bush receiving 4,258 votes to Democrat John Kerry's 260 votes in a precinct in Gahanna.

Records show only 638 voters cast ballots in that precinct.

Bush actually received 365 votes in the precinct, Matthew Damschroder, director of the Franklin County Board of Elections, told The Columbus Dispatch.

State and county election officials did not immediately respond to requests by The Associated Press for more details about the voting system and its vendor, and whether the error, if repeated elsewhere in Ohio, could have affected the outcome.

Bush won the state by more than 136,000 votes, according to unofficial results, and Kerry conceded the election on Wednesday after acknowledging that 155,000 provisional ballots yet to be counted in Ohio would not change the result.

The Secretary of State's Office said Friday it could not revise Bush's total until the county reported the error.

The Ohio glitch is among a handful of computer troubles that have emerged since Tuesday's elections.

In one North Carolina county, more than 4,500 votes were lost because the county mistakenly believed a computer that stored ballots electronically could hold more data than it did.

And in San Francisco, a malfunction with custom voting software could delay efforts to declare the winners of four races for county supervisor.

In the Ohio precinct in question, the votes are recorded onto a cartridge. On one of the three machines at that precinct, a malfunction occurred in the recording process, Damschroder said. He could not explain how the malfunction occurred.

Damschroder said people who had seen poll results on the election board's Web site called to point out the discrepancy. The error would have been discovered when the official count for the election is performed later this month, he said.

FDA takes new measures aiming to improve drug safety in States

BY DIEDTRA HENDERSON
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Buffeted by criticism, the Food and Drug Administration said Friday that it would appoint a director of drug safety and take other steps to improve the safety of medications.

Critics charge the agency ignored risks associated with antidepressants and the blockbuster

drug Vioxx, then intimidated its own reviewers when they pointed to safety concerns in both cases.

As sick and elderly Americans competed in lotteries for scarce flu vaccine, members of Congress chided the FDA for relying on the word of Chiron, the vaccine manufacturer, rather than investigating as aggressively as British regulators.

"Medicines that receive FDA approval are among the safest in the world; the measures we are taking are designed to strengthen this quality as well as our consumers' confidence that FDA's processes ensure the highest protection of the public health," Lester M. Crawford, acting FDA commissioner, said in a statement.

FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research will fill the vacant post of director of the Office of Drug Safety to oversee the safety of drugs after they have been approved for use.

In addition, the agency will sponsor a study by the Institute of Medicine, the health care arm of the National Academy of Science, to look at the effectiveness of the agency's drug safety oversight.

The study will take a closer look at whether improvements

are needed to tease out more details of a drug's side effects as it is more widely used.

The FDA also said it would begin a program to bridge differences of opinions among its scientific reviewers.

Because "such disagreements can have a potentially significant public health impact," Crawford said, the agency will convene an independent panel to review documents and make recommendations within 30 days to resolve those disputes.

Crawford said the agency's clinical reviewers and epidemiologists "evaluate and respond to identified concerns. This is what occurred recently with antidepressants and Vioxx."

Yet, in both cases reviewers told members of Congress they faced resistance within the agency after raising red flags.

This week, the FDA released David Graham's report on Vioxx in which the associate director for science said "disturbingly" he found evidence of increased cardiovascular risks among people taking the drug continued to mount after a 2000 study and another study linked the drug to "significant increased" risk of hospitalization for gastrointestinal bleeding.

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New Congress will be more like population

BY JIM ABRAMS

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The next Congress will look slightly more like the real America, with more women, Hispanics and blacks, including the first black man to enter the Senate in a quarter century.

In addition to senator-elect Barack Obama, D-Ill., only the third black ever to be elected by popular vote to the Senate, newly elected senators Ken Salazar, D-Colo., and Mel Martinez, R-Fla., will become the only Hispanic-Americans in the Senate.

The House will see the arrival of Bobby Jindal, R-La., the son of immigrants from India and only the second Indian-American to serve in Congress.

There will be 65 women in the 435-member House in the 109th Congress, including Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi and 41 other Democrats and 23 Republicans. That's up five from the current Congress.

Among the newcomers are Melissa Bean, D-Ill., a 42-year-old housewife and mother of two, who replaced Rep. Philip Crane, the longest-serving member of the House, and Gwen Moore, D-Wis., the first black ever to represent Wisconsin.

The Senate will continue to have 14 women. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, narrowly survived a tough election challenge, but the other four women up for re-election — Democrats Blanche Lincoln of Arkansas, Barbara Boxer of California, Barbara Mikulski of Maryland and Patty Murray of Washington — won handily.

The Congressional Black Caucus boosted its representation in the House by three, to 40, all Democrats. That includes such veterans as Charles Rangel, D-N.Y., top Democrat on the Ways and Means Committee and John Conyers, D-Mich., senior Democrat on the Judiciary Committee.

Blacks in Congress are still under the 13.3 percent share of the population in general, but now make up 20 percent of House Democrats. "I think the caucus will play a major role and will be listened to very carefully," said Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Md., current head of the Black Caucus.

Cummings said Obama's election in Illinois was a "tremendous victory" that will open the door for other black candidates. "It shows that an African-American who has the right kind of message and is bright and has a lot on the ball can win in a situation where it is predominantly white."

Obama, son of a black man from Kenya and a white woman from Kansas, will be the first African-American in the Senate since Carol Moseley Braun, D-Ill., left in 1995 and the first black man since Edward Brooke, a Massachusetts Republican who served from 1967 to 1979.

Hispanics in Congress were still well below the national population of 13.7 percent, but picked up one seat in the House, with 19 Democrats and four Republicans elected.

More important, Hispanics will return to the Senate for the first time since Joseph Manuel Montoya, D-N.M., was defeated in 1976.

Cuba-born Martinez was Housing and Urban Development secretary in the Bush administration before his successful run to the Senate seat from Florida, while Salazar, D-Col., replaced the retiring Colorado Republican Ben Nighthorse Campbell, the only American Indian in the Senate.

With Campbell's departure and the defeat of Rep. Brad Carson, D-Okla., in a Senate bid, the only American Indian in Congress is Tom Cole, R-Okla., a member of the Chickasaw Nation.

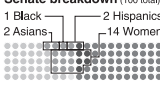
There are also five Asians in Congress: Hawaii's Democratic senators Daniel Akaka and

New Congress will be more diverse

The next Congress will have more women, Hispanics and blacks. The House of Representatives will have 65 women while the Senate will add one black and two Hispanics.

■ Republicans ■ Democrats

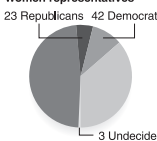
Senate breakdown (100 total)



House breakdown (435 total)

Women representatives

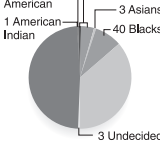
23 Republicans 42 Democrats



Minority representatives

1 Indian-American 23 Hispanics

1 American Indian 3 Asians



Daniel Inouye and three Democratic representatives — Michael Honda and Bob Matsui of California and David Wu of Oregon.

According to a Congressional Quarterly survey, the Senate in the new Congress will again be dominated by lawyers, with 58 attorneys, while 32 listed public ser-

vice and 30 business on their resumes. In the House, 163 members list public service, 162 business and 160 law in their backgrounds.

The House will have 128 Roman Catholics, 36 Presbyterians and 26 Jews, while the Senate will have 24 Roman Catholics, 14 Presbyterians and 11 Jews.

Some depressed by Kerry's loss

BY MALCOLM RITTER

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — It's a long way from the Manhattan office of psychoanalyst Sherman Pheiffer to the Cambridge, Mass., practice of psychologist Jaime Darwin. But both are in blue states that voted heavily for John Kerry, and the day he conceded, they heard plenty of distress about the election.

"My patients were incredulous, depressed, angry, very frightened," Pheiffer said. "Everyone talked about feeling frightened [about] the future of this country."

Darwin heard the same kinds of reactions. At the end of the campaign, Massachusetts Democrats "kind of let themselves hope Kerry would pull it out," she said, so patients felt "the roller coaster had crashed. I think we all had a little post-Red Sox magical thinking."

And among Kerry campaign volunteers, of course, the loss was still stinging the day after the concession.

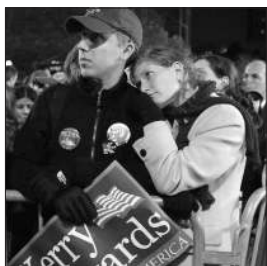
"If I happened to be on a tranquilizer or Prozac, I would have to triple my dose," joked Sam Feldman, a 75-year-old retired businessman who lives on Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts but who volunteered for Kerry in Florida.

Elizabeth Marshall, a volunteer at the Centre County Democrats headquarters in Pennsylvania, said people there showed "bereavement, almost. People felt that something they had, which was hope for imminent change, had been taken from them."

The good news, mental health experts say, is that most Kerry supporters will get over their disappointment on their own. In fact, maybe sooner than they think.

But now you've got them at the depths of their despair," said David Gilbert, a Harvard psychologist who has studied voters' emotional reaction to elections. "They're not going to feel worse in a week. They're going to feel better."

In fact, Gilbert said, his work has shown that voters get over their election-day disappointments faster than they predict they will.



Supporters react as they wait for results during the election night rally for Democratic presidential candidate Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., in Boston, on Tuesday. Most Kerry supporters will get over their disappointment on their own, maybe sooner than they think, mental health experts say.

"They don't think they'll be over it in a month, but they will be," he said.

Even now, Pheiffer, Darwin and other mental health professionals said they weren't getting any new patients because of the Kerry defeat. And Dr. David Rissmiller, chairman of the psychiatry department at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey-School of Osteopathic Medicine, said there's been no election-related jump in calls at two New Jersey crisis centers he's familiar with.

Temporary sadness, anxiety and concern about the future are understandable responses among Kerry supporters, said Dr. Charles Goodstein, a psychiatrist at the New York University Medical Center.

So when is it time to call a mental health professional? "When something goes on longer than you're comfortable with, then talk to somebody," Darwin advised. "You don't have to have major depression to talk to somebody."

Puerto Rico ex-governor disputes election results

BY LEONARDO ALDRIDGE

The Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Former Gov. Pedro Rosello disputed preliminary election results suggesting a win for his opponent and said Thursday he was confident he would prevail in a recount.

The recount is planned Monday following an extremely close vote Tuesday between Rosello, who supports making Puerto Rico a U.S.

state, and Anibal Acevedo Vila, the U.S. territory's nonvoting delegate to Congress.

"We have information showing that this process is going well, we'll prevail," Rosello told reporters Thursday in his first public statements since the vote.

Puerto Rico's election commission said Acevedo Vila had won by 3,880 votes, according to preliminary results. But the margin was so slim — Acevedo Vila's lead was about 0.2 percent — that officials ordered a recount.

Acevedo Vila claimed victory Wednesday, and began announcing plans for the transition. Rosello declined to give details

about his victory claim but criticized Acevedo Vila for beginning to name a transition team before the recount.

"It's disrespectful" to the election process, Rosello said.

Acevedo Vila, from the pro-commonwealth Popular Democratic Party, was running to replace his ally Gov. Sila Cal-

deron, who didn't seek re-election.

Rosello, of the pro-statehood New Progressive Party, was governor from 1993 through 2000. He has pledged a new campaign to make Puerto Rico the 51st U.S. state through a referendum on statehood, an option narrowly defeated in nonbinding votes in 1993 and 1998.

Acevedo Vila criticized Rosello for corruption scandals involving officials in his government, and a number of supporters said that was a major concern.

Acevedo Vila has pledged a constitutional assembly to discuss Puerto Rico's status next year. He says he favors reforming the commonwealth system to allow for greater autonomy, particularly in economic development.

“We have information showing that when this process is over, we'll prevail.”

Former Gov.

Pedro Rosello

regarding a recount

of election votes

Texas Board argues textbook terms

One member says books must define marriage as between man, woman

BY NATALIE GOTT

The Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas — A State Board of Education member called on textbook publishers to change the wording in health books being considered for use in Texas schools to clarify state that marriage is between a man and a woman.

Republican Terri Leo said certain books attempt to nullify a Texas law banning the recognition of same-sex civil unions by using "asexual sexual phrases" such as "individuals who marry" instead of "husbands and wives." "I want the reader, the child to know that marriage is between a man and a woman," Leo said in a

written statement released during a board meeting Thursday.

The 15-member board is scheduled to vote Friday on whether to approve the books for middle- and high-schools. The decision could affect dozens of states because books sold in Texas, the nation's second-largest textbook buyer, often are marketed elsewhere.

Democratic board member Mary Helen Berlanga noted that one textbook showed a picture of a mother and a father and a young girl and her brother.

"We cannot start censoring books because we do not like the terminology," Berlanga said. "I don't see two males or two females holding hands."

The elected board, which has 10 Republicans and five Democrats, is allowed to reject books only because of factual errors or failure to follow state-mandated curriculum.

A spokesman for one of the publishers, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, said it will come up with something it believes is appropriate and bring it to the board Friday.

Randall Ellis, executive director of the Lesbian/Gay Rights Lobby of Texas, said Leo was asserting a religious right agenda into student textbooks.

"My bottom-line opinion is it's irresponsible," Ellis said. "There comes a time when you need to put your own agenda aside and do what's best for youth."



State Board of Education member Terri Leo, from Spring, Texas, speaks during a board meeting on Thursday in Austin, Texas.

Lip-synching furor: Out of tune with reality?

Artists say fans' demands for over-the-top performances fuel use of backup tracks

BY NEKESA MUMBI MOODY

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — It seems Ashlee Simpson will forever bear the scarlet "L" — for lip-synching.

The 20-year-old "singer" has been lampooned and shamed, held up as an example of today's style-over-substance culture — all because of one lip-synch gone famously awry on "Saturday Night Live."

Yet must Simpson bear the cross alone, while all the entertainment world goes free? Consider this:

- Now-classic footage from shows like "American Bandstand" featured artists lip-synching.

- Michael Jackson mouthed part of his superstar-making moment on the "Motown 25" TV show in 1983.

- Whitney Houston's spine-chilling rendition of the "The Star-Spangled Banner" at the 1991 Super Bowl was prerecorded.

- And perhaps the only moments when Britney Spears did not lip-synch during her recent tour was when she said hello and goodbye to her audience.

"It doesn't make the least bit of difference," Dick Clark, America's oldest teenager and the creator of the now-defunct "American Bandstand," said.

"Every motion picture you've seen, every 'American Bandstand' you saw, most of all MTV you see, it's all lip-synched," he said.

"[What's important is] the impression you get as an audience. If you're pleased with what you saw, who gives a hoot how it got to you?"

It never seemed to matter in the past.

We've all watched performances where singers dance, prance and almost do back-flips while singing — but aren't a bit out of breath. Or when they sing earnestly to a pre-recorded ballad during a TV show. Or rap along to their own song, à la Eminem, also on a recent "Saturday Night Live."

Producer Jimmy Jam, who's worked with artists ranging from Janet Jackson to Usher, said he too was surprised over the Simpson incident — surprised that it was such a big deal.

"I thought everybody knew that everybody lip-synched," he said. "I just thought when you went and saw Britney Spears, you knew that she lip-synched the whole concert. ...



Singer Patti LaBelle performs at the Democratic National Convention in Boston in July. LaBelle says she never lip-synchs at shows.

They're seeing a show, and to them, that's what a show is."

Not for everyone. R&B veteran Patti LaBelle, known for her booming voice and creative improvisations, lamented that "the whole world is so phony today, so people are accepting it. People are loving phonies."

Sounding hoarse from recent performances, LaBelle said she never lip-synchs at shows. But she's seen plenty of it and not just from singers with feather-light voices.

"I was surprised when I heard some of the people who were doing it," he said. "When

some of the bigger stars who can sing their butts off are using some enhancements, I'm like, why?"

Steve Leeds, a former record executive at labels such as Virgin and Universal, offers an explanation: "People want to hear what's on the record. You've got to supply that expectation with whatever's necessary. Studio wizardry is definitely part of a live music show today."

Sometimes, performers just plain lip-synch. Other times they add an extra vocal of the song, and sing along to it so their voices sound fuller. Then there's live help — background singers to make the star's voice sound stronger.

And sometimes, they just want to sound perfect.

"There's more of a premium of getting it right," said Jam.

"Whitney, when she did the national anthem, which was the greatest national anthem that we ever heard, what we heard over the air was prerecorded. The reason it was prerecorded was that was a moment that no one wanted any mistake. They didn't want any feedback, they didn't want any technical difficulties ... and it was great."

While Taylor Hanson of the group Hanson acknowledges that not all lip-synched performances are evil, he complains that record companies today are manufacturing artists who can't perform live even if they wanted to.

"There's so many great bands who are performing, and singing their guts out every night, and the prevalence of artists being represented ... and saying, 'Hey, everyone does this, everyone sings to track.' I just think it's lowering the standard," he fumed.

"It's totally insulting to so much great music out there."

But P. Diddy says the practice has become standard, especially in an era where it's become more common for entertainers to do everything but juggle onstage.

"No many people at times have used backup tracks. I just think [Simpson] was the first one that had a mishap on it. I've heard her sing live. I don't think she's doing no Milli Vanilli live. I said, referring to the infamous duo that didn't even sing the vocals they were lip-synching to."

"That's the way the ball bounces," Diddy said. "I don't think she'll be the last one to sing along to a track."

Fla. slots approved

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — A proposal that would let voters decide whether to allow slot machines at race tracks and jai alai frontons in South Florida won approval after elections officials discovered thousands of absentee votes missed in an electronic tally on Election Day.

The vast majority of the 79,000 absentee ballots added late in Broward County approved the initiative Thursday. That made all the difference in the outcome, swamping the narrow lead that opposing the narrow lead had clung to since Tuesday.

State and local elections officials said the ballot oversight was due to human error in computer programming, not a technical glitch.

AbioCor patient dies

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — A man who lived more than five months with an artificial heart has died of multiple organ failure, the heart manufacturer said Friday.

William Wiley, 73, was the 14th recipient of the soft-ball-sized AbioCor artificial heart, which is made of plastic and titanium and powered by batteries.

When he received the device at Jewish Hospital in May, Wiley probably had less than two weeks to live without the implant, said Andrea tenBroek, spokeswoman for Abiomed Inc., the Danvers, Mass.-based company that makes the device.

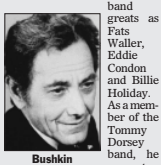
Abiomed has said it hopes to begin marketing the AbioCor on a limited basis next year.

Jazz musician dies

LOS ANGELES — Jazz pianist and songwriter Joe Bushkin, who co-wrote Frank Sinatra's first hit and performed with some of the best jazz musicians of his time, has died of pneumonia. He was 87.

Bushkin died Wednesday at his Santa Barbara home, his daughter Nina Bushkin Judson said.

Bushkin performed and recorded with such jazz and big



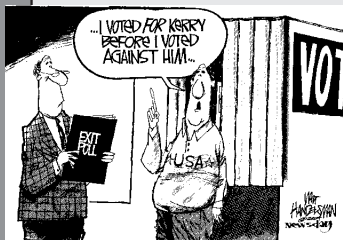
greats as Fats Waller, Eddie Condon and Billie Holiday. As a member of the Tommy Dorsey band, he co-wrote the hit "Oh Look! At Me Now" with John DeFries. The song launched the career of young Frank Sinatra, the band's vocalist.

Besides daughters Christina and Nina, Bushkin is survived by his wife, Frances, daughter Tiffany Bushkin and Maria Bushkin-Stave, and six grandchildren.

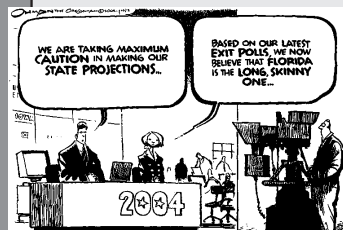
From The Associated Press

Looking at the news

A weekly sampling of U.S. editorial cartoons



WALT HANDELSMAN/Tribune Media Services



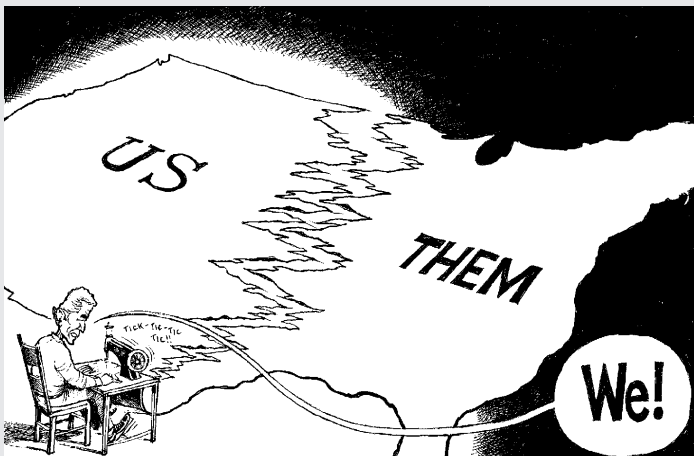
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IN THE WORLD

Official: Arafat 'at a critical point between life and death'

PLO pushes for unity in face of possible transition power struggle

BY LARA SUKHTIAN

The Associated Press

PARIS — Yasser Arafat is in a coma and is "between life and death," though he is not brain dead, his spokeswoman said Friday. Doctors still had no diagnosis, but anxious Palestinian officials were already looking for ways to prevent unrest if their 75-year-old leader dies.

Lella Shahid, the Palestinian envoy to France, strongly denied French and Israeli media reports that Arafat was being kept alive on life support amid conflicting reports over his condition after a sharp decline a day earlier.

"I can assure you that there is no brain death," Shahid told French RTL radio. "He is in a coma. We don't know the type, but it's a reversible coma. ... Today we can say that, given his condition and age, he is at a critical point between life and death."

Shahid suggested the coma occurred after he was put under anesthesia to have additional medical tests, including an endoscopy, colonoscopy and a biopsy of the spinal cord.

"He may or may not wake up," Shahid said, adding that "all vital organs are func-

tioning."

Endoscopy and colonoscopy, where a camera is threaded down the throat and up the colon to inspect the intestine, involves sedation but not a general anesthetic, which would induce unconsciousness.

However, a spinal cord biopsy is often done under general anesthesia.

Experts say it is highly unlikely that Arafat's coma was caused by a reaction to a general anesthetic and that it is far more probable that deterioration in his underlying illness led to the coma.

With Arafat fighting for life, Palestinians sought to project unity ahead of what is feared will be a divisive succession struggle. Arafat's Fatah faction of the PLO met with members of the militant groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad, along with other

fractions, in the Gaza Strip on Friday.

Arafat has not appointed a successor and it appears that in any transition period, the Palestinians will be led by a collective,

headed by Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia and Arafat's No. 2 in the PLO, Mahmoud Abbas.

Much will depend on how well the two men get along, since the division of powers is not clearly defined. As prime minister, Qureia is to deal with day-to-day affairs of governing and he has assumed some of Arafat's financial and security

powers. Abbas is to handle diplomacy, Palestinian officials said.

Israel, meanwhile, underlined that it will not allow Arafat to be buried in Jerusalem as he reportedly wishes. Jerusalem is the city where Jewish kings resided and not Arab terrorists," Israeli Justice Minister

It appears that in any transition period, the Palestinians will be led by a collective, headed

by Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia and Arafat's No. 2 in the PLO, Mahmoud Abbas.



Supporters of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat hold a Palestinian flag as they stand behind a fence outside the Percy Military Teaching Hospital in Clamart outside Paris early Friday.

Yosef Lapid told Associated Press Television News.

Palestinian lawmaker Saeb Erekat chided Israel after some celebrated reports that Arafat had died.

Asked if there was any chance Arafat will revive and be able to continue to rule, Erekat said, "I don't know. I'm not with the doctors. The doctors haven't told us. But our thoughts and prayer is that he may be [able to] do that."

Dollar hits record low on euro

The Associated Press

BERLIN — The U.S. dollar hit an all-time low against the euro Friday, struggling off positive U.S. employment data amid worries about oil prices and concern over the U.S. budget deficit.

The dollar had rallied a bit earlier in the day, with the euro briefly dropping below \$1.28 after the U.S. Labor Department reported that employers aggressively hired new workers in October, adding 337,000 people to their payroll.

But the U.S. currency resumed its downward trend, and later in the day the euro reached a new

high of \$1.2950. It had reached its previous peak of \$1.2971 in February. The shared currency of 12 European nations has been trading since 1999.

Oil prices, which remain relatively high despite an 11 percent decline in the past 10 days, have raised doubts about the strength of the U.S. economy, adding new concerns on top of high U.S. trade and budget deficits, factors that have weighed on the dollar for months.

The U.S. current account deficit, the broadest measure of foreign trade, has risen to nearly \$600 billion, or around 6 percent of gross domestic product, as

Americans buy more from overseas than U.S. businesses can export.

Commerzbank economist Christoph Balz said he expected to see the euro hit \$1.31 in the next couple of months, but to settle in the long-term.

"The U.S. economy is stronger than people think, which will lead to higher interest rates and make the dollar more attractive," he said.

In addition, many analysts believe the administration of U.S. president George W. Bush, re-elected Tuesday, has deliberately sought a lower dollar in order to help U.S. exports.



French President Jacques Chirac gestures as he talks with Spain's Prime Minister Jose Luis Zapatero on Thursday prior to the start of the EU summit in Brussels.

EU looks for better relations with U.S. in Bush's 2nd term

BY RAF CASERT

The Associated Press

BRUSSELS, Belgium — The European Union and the United States recommitted themselves to a smooth trans-Atlantic relationship Friday and hoped President Bush's second term would no longer be marred by nasty political and trade disputes.

But French President Jacques Chirac, wary of Washington's global economic and political clout, said it was imperative for Europe to boost its standing so that the world can become "multi-polar."

"It is evident that Europe, now more than ever, must strengthen its unity and dynamism when faced with this great world power," Chirac said at the end of a two-day summit. "More than

ever we must reinforce Europe politically and economically," said Balkenende.

Jan Peter Balkenende, the Dutch prime minister, who chaired the meeting of 25 EU leaders, made a state-clearing phone call to Bush after hosting the summit of government leaders and congratulated him on his re-election.

"We share the same values," said Balkenende. "We want to fight terrorism, problems in parts of the world, poverty — all the issues make it necessary to work together."

At their summit, EU leaders offered to put differences aside and issued a statement saying: "Our deep political, economic and cultural ties make us each other's natural and indispensable partners."

Putin signs Kyoto Protocol, will start in '05

BY VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV

The Associated Press

MOSCOW — President Vladimir Putin has signed a bill confirming Russia's ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, the Kremlin said Friday, giving the final stamp of approval to the global climate pact that will come into force early next year.

Both houses of parliament last month ratified the protocol, which aims to stem global warming by reducing greenhouse-gas emissions. Putin signed the bill on Thursday, the Kremlin said.

Without Russia's support, the pact — which has been rejected by the United States and Australia — could not have come into effect.

It needed endorsement by 55 industrialized nations accounting for at least 55 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions in 1990.

The United States alone accounted for 36 percent of carbon dioxide emissions in 1990, while Russia accounted for 17 percent.

Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi praised Russia's move.

"It's a fresh start for policies to combat global warming. I warmly welcome it," he said.

After years of hesitation, Putin pledged in May to speed up approval in return for the European Union's support of Russia's bid to join the World Trade Organization. The 1997 pact would take effect 90 days after Russia notified the United Nations of its ratification.

Russian officials have voiced hope that the treaty's provisions allowing countries to trade greenhouse gas emission allowances would enable Moscow to attract foreign investment for its crumbling industries.

Once the deal takes effect, industrialized countries will have until 2012 to cut their collective emissions of six key greenhouse gases to 5.2 percent below the 1990 level. Greenhouse gases are believed to trap heat in the atmosphere.

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Laid to rest

OH DAYTON — Among the tiny graves on Blocker Hill, the wind echoes with the tortured cries of computer programmers.

Beneath the eight grave markers, and perhaps in a rumored unmarked grave nearby, lie reams of paper printouts of code for software that has left this mortal operating system.

The cemetery is a quirky tradition among the programmers at LexisNexis, which provides online legal and business information.

Rather than simply delete programs that are retired or replaced, they print them out for a proper send-off — not always with fond regards.

"The code wakes us up in the middle of the night," said Doug Persegnetti, who recalls the many times his fellow systems engineers and technical support workers are called in the middle of the night to fix system problems.

The name Blocker Hill was picked because the outdated equipment and code represented roadblocks to the company's future.

Ruth contract on eBay

RI PROVIDENCE — Now that the curse is reversed, Rhode Island philanthropist Alan Shaw Feinstein is joining the rush of Red Sox memorabilia sales by auctioning the original 1919 contract that sent Babe Ruth from Boston to the Yankees.

Starting bid: \$50,000 on eBay, the online auction store. The eBay descriptor calls the document "the most famous sports contract in history."

Feinstein paid \$99,000 to LeLand's Auction House in 1993 to obtain the only known copy of the agreement that fans came to believe cursed the Red Sox and their world-championship dreams.

Feinstein said all the money will go to charity, including a million-dollar national anti-hunger campaign that he has promised to endow.

Costume gets reaction

MI GRAND RAPIDS — A high school student's costume garnered a top prize — and a five-day suspension — at the school's Halloween masquerade party.

The Ku Klux Klansman getup took the prize for the scariest costume at the City High School dance attended by the principal, assistant principal and other staff members.

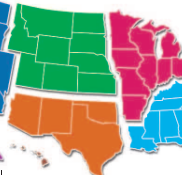
Superintendent Bert Bleke said he agreed with the school's decision to suspend the student but wanted to know why adults at the party failed to stop the senior, who was wearing a white-hooded outfit, from entering, much less winning a prize.

Contacted by a newspaper, the student declined to discuss his Halloween outfit. He said school leaders advised him to keep mum.

Pipeline ruptures, leaks

TX HOUSTON — A natural gas explosion shook homes in northwestern Harris County after a pipeline ruptured early Wednesday, but authorities said there were no injuries and some residents were only briefly evacuated.

Residents rushed from their homes in the Cypress Fairbanks suburb after hearing a series of



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

blasts shortly after 1:30 a.m.

They reported hearing a roar like an approaching plane as the gas began leaking and a vapor cloud spread across the area.

Harris County law officers said gas began seeping from a 6-inch gash in a pipeline owned by Trunk Line Gas Co.

Law officers earlier went door to door, advising some residents living close to the leak to leave their homes. County sheriff's officers told other area residents to stay indoors with their windows closed and cut off air conditioning.

Officials were investigating how the gash occurred in the line.

Couple arrested

KS WICHITA — A couple who ran a group home were indicted Wednesday by a federal grand jury for involuntary servitude for allegedly forcing mentally ill residents to work at their farm, a judge said.

Arian Kaufman, 68, and his wife, Linda, 61, were informed of the indictment by a federal magistrate during a detention hearing for the couple in Wichita.

Prosecutor Linda Kristgen said the Kaufmans controlled every aspect of the residents' lives, including how much they weighed and whether they could wear clothing, smoke, get mail or allowances, and sleep in beds.

The Kaufmans remain jailed until Magistrate Judge Donald Bostwick decides whether they pose a danger to the community and the former residents of the



An entertaining guy

Eddie Bowman of Branson, Mo., entertains students at Nettie Marshall Elementary in Nacogdoches, Texas. Bowman, better known to his fans as children's author and entertainer Chester Drawers, combines music and humor in his programs to encourage children to read.

group home in Newton, in central Kansas.

Federal authorities arrested the Kaufmans last week.

New shelter a first

NH LACONIA — For the first time, a federal program that lends money to rural communities is helping build an animal shelter in New Hampshire.

The Humane Society says the Agriculture Department's Rural Development program is lending it \$1.8 million to help pay for a new shelter in Laconia. It will replace an aging shelter that serves more than 2,000 animals a year.

The loan will help replace the existing shelter built in 1953 with a 13,000-square-foot center. Humane Society officials said the new shelter will be built on the six acres that houses the existing shelter buildings.

The federal Department of Agriculture Loans are made to assist rural communities develop or improve essential public community facilities at low fixed rates.

Eligibility is limited to nonprofit corporations and public bodies serving rural areas, such as fire departments, museums, libraries and health care facilities.

The shelter in Laconia is among the largest and oldest shelters in the region.

Paramedics suit settled

TX HOUSTON — The City Council has approved a \$79.5 million settlement of paramedics' nine-year legal battle to collect overtime pay.

The attorney for the 2,600 paramedics who are plaintiffs in the class-action suit said Wednesday his clients would receive sums ranging from \$500 to tens of thousands of dollars, depending on how much overtime they worked without proper compensation.

In September, Mayor Bill White announced that the city would settle the lawsuit rather than continue to appeal unfavorable court decisions.

Oystermen suing

LA NEW ORLEANS — Louisiana oystermen have asked the state Supreme Court to restore a \$1.3 billion judgment awarded to them for a coastal restoration project that the oystermen say damaged their grounds.

The high court threw out the award last month, saying the oystermen were not legally entitled to the money.

In Wednesday's filing, the oystermen argued that the high court based that ruling not on evidence that was presented during trial, but on new evidence introduced by lawyers for the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources during the appellate stages.

John Lovett, a Loyola University professor, said the Supreme Court can review evidence that was rejected by the trial judge. New affidavits, depositions and documents that were not previously introduced at trial cannot be inserted into the case at the appellate level, he said.

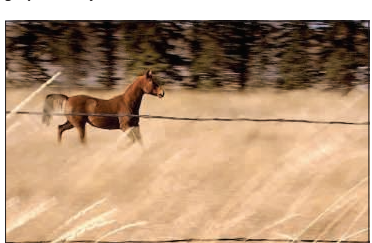
Separately, another group of oystermen suing the state over the Caernarvon freshwater diversion amended its lawsuit.

The oyster farmers' rights to equal protection have been violated, according to the suit.

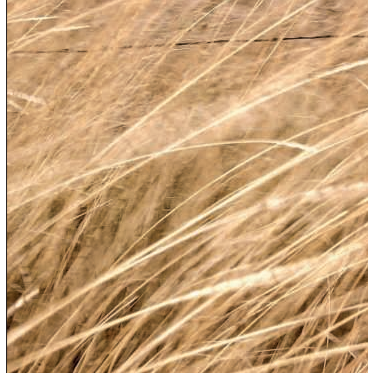


Swinging time

Carole Owens shows Yocum Elementary students about pendulums at Math and Science Fun Day at the Wildcat Dome on Barton Campus in El Dorado, Ark. The school's students have spent the week there. Volunteers helped with the teaching at the dome and students were broken down into small groups for the day.



Amber waves of grass



Great Falls, Mont., on Tuesday.

A horse runs in a pasture along Lower River Road south of



Frosty bloom

Frost rims a petunia in Oakdale Park in Salina, Kan. The low temperature Wednesday morning recorded at the Salina Journal weather site was 30.5 degrees.



A twist on a tale

Dr. Henry L. Johnson, right, Mississippi superintendent of education, stopped at Lucy Webb Elementary School in Greenville, Miss., to read to a class of kindergarten. The book read by Johnson, "The True Story of the Three Little Pigs," gives the Big Bad Wolf's version of what happened, presenting what the Wolf calls a miscarriage of justice and the legacy of wolves.



Otter-ly adorable

Deb Copeland, lead keeper for the Rainforest in Cleveland, Ohio, cuddles with two Asian short clawed otters Tuesday. Wasabi and Lee were born at the zoo eight weeks ago; their father was born there in 2002. The others are on the endangered species list, so their birth in captivity was especially celebrated.

4 die after car hits lake

MI LONG LAKE TOWNSHIP — As a light rain and darkness fell, a woman driving her young daughter and two classmates to a dance concert apparently missed a sign at the edge of Long Lake warning that the road was about to end. The car plunged into 20 feet of water, drowning all four.

"There's not even a skid mark showing they tried to brake," said waterfront resident Lou Beam. "It's a shame — just hard to believe."

Authorities believe Dr. Karen Lynn Gilhooly, 46, took a wrong turn onto a road that ends at a boat launch Wednesday evening. By mistake, she turned a short distance ahead of another road that goes toward the arts center where the concert was held.

A sign warns drivers that the road ends, but it was dark and raining, police said.

The children killed were Rowan Sanford, Gilhooly's 10-year-old daughter, and classmates Sierra Fetterolf, 11, and Anna Lynn Maas, 10.

A man saw the car hit the water and called 911 with his cell phone, and rescuers rushed to the site. Anna was pulled out alive by a dive team but died Thursday at a hospital in Grand Rapids.

Judge rules for customer

NH CONCORD — A Bedford man has the right to see the names and addresses of other Bedford residents who complained about the electric service provided by Public Service Company of New Hampshire, a judge ruled.

Brian Lamy used the state Public Utilities Commission after it refused to provide the names and addresses of people who complained about voltage problems, claiming it was violating the state's Right-to-Know Law.

Judge John Lewis ruled that although the electric customers have some privacy interests, the public has a greater interest in evaluating the commission's performance as a regulatory agency.

"The assurance of high quality electrical service is of major interest to us all," he wrote. "Nor has the court been shown how the disclosure here at issue would likely put PSNH or any other public utility at an unfair competitive advantage."

Quarries become parks

IN BLOOMINGTON — The state will give \$41,898 to county officials to turn abandoned limestone quarries in southern Indiana into parks as early as 2006. The parks would also include hiking and climbing features.

Surgeon removed

PA ALLENTOWN — In the midst of lackluster growth in Lehigh Valley Hospital's kidney transplant program, administrators removed a surgeon who started the program more than a decade ago, officials said.

Surgeon Craig Reckard and his associate transplanted 35 kidneys this fiscal year, a significant increase over the 13 kidneys transplanted in 1992, but fewer than the 44 performed in 2002, according to hospital statistics.

"With a community this size and the age of the population, we could be doing twice as many trans-

plants," said Dr. John Fitzgibbons, a kidney specialist and chairman of medicine at the hospital. He said 70 transplants a year seemed reasonable.

Administrators held Reckard accountable for failing to attract and operate on more patients, Fitzgibbons and doctors on staff said.

E. coli outbreak grows

NC RALEIGH — At least 24 people, most of them children, have been infected with E. coli bacteria, and the outbreak might be connected to a petting zoo that was at the State Fair, authorities said.

Two of those stricken have developed a severe complication known as hemolytic-uremic syndrome, in which the number of blood platelets suddenly drops, red blood cells are destroyed and the kidneys shut down. The syndrome can be life-threatening or cause permanent kidney damage.

The number of confirmed cases of E. coli infections rose to 24, and nine more cases are suspected, officials at the state Department of Health and Human Services said Wednesday.

Health officials are awaiting genetic tests on some of the bacteria to see whether the cases are related. Of the 33 cases being examined, 15 have some link to the state fair, officials said. Eight people did not go to the fair, and investigators are awaiting information from the other 10.

Hot air solved problem

KS OSWEGO — And you thought the hot air ended when Election Day arrived: Labette County election officials pulled out a hair dryer to solve a jam in an electronic scanner.

Problems started when the county clerk's office began counting 805 advance ballots just after 7 p.m. Tuesday.

Election officials tried to fix the machine and called a technician from the scanner's manufacturer, but a concerned citizen stepped up with her own idea.

Dee Brown, the sales manager at Flesch Co., a Parsons printer, suspected humidity may have swelled ballots sent by mail. She suggested a hair dryer. After a hair dryer was located, workers tried it out. Ballots still didn't feed into the scanner, but the situation improved.

Lawyer couldn't face up

WA SEATTLE — A former prosecutor was arrested for investigation of attempted murder after he shot and critically injured a lawyer he had been scheduled to face at a court hearing, authorities said.

Kevin Y. Jung suffered at least one gunshot wound after he pulled his Lexus sedan into the parking lot outside his quiet suburban office Wednesday morning, Bellevue police said. He was in critical condition early Thursday at Overlake Medical Center in Bellevue.

Witnesses reported the shooter's description and license plate number to officers, who tracked the plates through a rental agency to William R. Joice, a former Snohomish County deputy prosecutor.

Joice was jailed Wednesday night for investigation of attempted murder. Joice worked in the prosecutor's office from 1991-2000, said Muel R. Roe, the state's chief criminal deputy prosecutor. Joice had been scheduled to face Jung in a civil case, a local paper reported.

Stories and photos from wire services

FACES

'Show Me the Way'... to the voting booth

Newly naturalized American citizen and '70s rock icon Peter Frampton finds political calling

BY LISA CORNWELL

The Associated Press

CINCINNATI — The long blond hair and sexy magazine covers that forged British rock star Peter Frampton's image as a teen idol of the 1970s are gone.

That's just fine with the recently naturalized U.S. citizen, who is pouring his passion into writing and performing new music — and becoming a political activist in America's heartland.

The 54-year-old guitarist and singer had the best-selling live album ever — 1976's "Frampton Comes Alive!" — with hits such as "Show Me the Way" and "Do You Feel Like We Do?" He is grateful for his early success, but relieved to be appreciated more today as a musician than a rock idol.

"'Frampton Comes Alive!' was so enormous that it almost became a living entity," Frampton said in an interview at his suburban Cincinnati home. "I made a lot of mistakes like posing for a Rolling Stone magazine cover and thinking they really wouldn't use the one photo I let them take of me without a shirt. That cover essentially said, 'Goodbye musician, hello teenybopper star.' It was very frustrating."

The Beckenham, England, native started playing guitar as a child and was lead guitarist and singer in the British pop group The Herd by the age of 16. He formed Humble Pie with singer and guitarist Steve Marriott before moving on to his '70s solo career.

Frampton's career began to slide in the 1980s until an invitation from friend and fellow rocker David Bowie to play lead guitar on his 1987 movie tour.

"I owe David a lot," Frampton said.

"He reintroduced me to the world as a gui-

tar player, not an image."

He started playing small clubs and amphitheatres after that, and has released several CDs in recent years, including a remastered version of "Frampton Comes Alive!"

Frampton moved to Cincinnati four years ago with his wife, Tina, and their 8-year-old daughter to be closer to his wife's family.

"Family is what's most important," said Frampton, whose family also includes his son and daughter and his wife's daughter from previous marriages. "We have a rule where if I am going to be away for two weeks, I come home in between."

Frampton, who said he was motivated to become an American citizen by the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, also has become active in national politics.

He volunteered to perform at a private fund-raising concert in Cincinnati this summer for Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry and appeared on stage in Toledo, Ohio, recently with rock musicians Neil Young and Pearl Jam as part of the "Vote For Change" tour.

"I was pretty naive about American politics," he said, laughing about coming out of a grocery to find someone had removed the Kerry sticker from his car. "Now I have one inside my car window so no one can take it."

Frampton was scheduled to leave on Election Day for a tour of the United Kingdom, but said he wouldn't leave until after he votes.

"The last election showed us that every vote counts," he said.

Peter Frampton, a '70s rock superstar whose career has continued to flourish, is pursuing a new interest in American politics. Frampton, a newly naturalized American citizen, lives with his wife and 8-year-old daughter in Cincinnati.

"I was pretty naive about American politics," Frampton said, laughing about coming out of a grocery to find someone had removed the Kerry sticker from his car. "Now I have one inside my car window so no one can take it."

Illness halts LL Cool J's tour

LL Cool J has canceled the remaining 12 dates on his tour due to an abdominal ailment.

"I am extremely disappointed to have to cancel the rest of this fun and successful tour," the 36-year-old rapper-actor said in a statement. "I apologize for disappointing my fans who have already bought tickets."

No additional information was available Tuesday about his illness. A release from his publicist said he is under a doctor's care and requires medication and rest.

Refunds can be sought at the point of purchase.



LL Cool J

A Beckham for your wall

British soccer and style icon David Beckham, as famous for his trendsetting hairstyles as his on-field performances, has another feather to add to his cap — artistic muse.

The England captain and Real Madrid player was the inspiration for works by 25 contemporary British artists offered Thursday at a charity auction in London.

The auction, organized by the National Debt Children's Society, raised more than \$110,600, spokesman Matthew Stickle said.

Using media ranging from charcoal to glitter paint, artists depicted Beckham in poses ranging from reflective daydreamer to a godlike figure towering over a smaller version of himself. Contributors included renowned artist Peter Blake and former Frankie Goes to Hollywood singer Holly Johnson.

Auction organizer Hugo Rittson-Thomas said Beckham was chosen as a subject as he was the most globally recognized icon of the decade. It's not the first time Beckham has filled the role of artistic muse. Artist Sam Taylor-Wood recently filmed him asleep for a video titled "David," on display in Britain's National Portrait Gallery.

Rugby player makes up for games

The macho world of rugby has a new look. One player on the famed All Blacks team wears eye makeup during games.

Ma'a Nonu told a TV interviewer

Tuesday that he recently began wearing dark eyeliner in major games and would continue to do so on New Zealand's tour of Britain and Italy. He said his teammates gave him "some grief," but he will continue with his fashion statement.

Nonu said he always tries to express his personality on the field. He began by wearing dreadlocks, but when that became common among New Zealand players he experimented with hair colors. Now, he applies the eyeliner in the dressing room before games.



Nonu

Beach Boys honored with monument

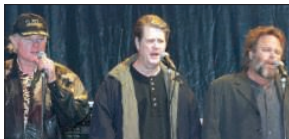
Just a few miles from the surf and sand the Beach Boys celebrated, the city will dedicate a monument where Brian, Carl and Dennis Wilson grew up.

The Wilson home was razed to make room for the Century Freeway, so the monument will sit at the end of dead-end 119th Street next to a sound wall built to mute traffic noise.

The effort to get landmark status for the Wilson home site was led by Harry Jarnagan, a construction engineer and Beach Boys fan from Tracy, Calif. In August, the California Historical Landmark Commission approved Jarnagan's application.

The landmark status committee held a design competition for the monument and 16 entries were received. Jarnagan said most proposals, which can be viewed at www.beachboyslandmark.org, feature images of surfboards, waves or musical notes sculpted from brick, bronze and granite.

Stories and photos from The Associated Press



From left: Mike Love, Brian Wilson, Carl Wilson

YOUR MONEY

Shopping a second thought during election

Stores see sales slow down during larger news events

BY ANDREA K. WALKER

The Baltimore Sun

BALTIMORE — Some call it the "CNN effect."

Retailers experience a drop in activity during especially large news events.

"Election Day retailing is a very soft retailing day," said Britt Beemer, chairman of America's Research Group, which tracks shopping habits.

In an era of 24-hour news, consumers are often immune to the continual buzz of headlines, but some events carry enough suspense and anxiety to disrupt buying patterns. The terrorist attack on Sept. 11, 2001, and the U.S. launch of Operation Iraqi Freedom in mid-March 2003 froze normal patterns of commerce. Sometimes, events can create activity in just one region, such as the sniper attacks in and around Washington, D.C., two years ago. Sports championships can consume a region, too, although they can also stimulate certain types of spending, such as at restaurants and sports merchandisers.

"Anytime consumers are distracted with world events, politics, sports or any other piece of news, they become more focused

on finding out more information or educating themselves and they tend not to think as much about shopping," said Ellen Tolley, a spokeswoman for the National Retail Federation, a trade group in Washington. "When consumers become involved with other issues, shopping takes a back seat. It becomes a secondary activity."

The impact normally doesn't last long or hurt overall sales, experts said. In most years, shoppers are back to their old selves within a week after the election.

Not all retailers are affected, either. People won't stop buying necessities such as food and health supplies. People with birthdays this week still get presents, Tolley pointed out. Discretionary items such as a new winter coat or computer might get delayed.

"Shopping has become a social experience to some degree and people don't devote the effort when there is anything that has an impact on their free time and thoughts," said Fred Hurvitz, an instructor of marketing at the Smeal College of Business at Pennsylvania State University.

"We notice certain types of retailers suffer when certain events



Clara Tuberville and Boyd Taliver, a married couple from Washington, D.C., shop at the Save-A-Lot grocery store in Capitol Heights, Md., in September. Although Americans won't stop buying food and health items, suspense and anxiety during a down-to-the-wire presidential campaign does interrupt shopping patterns.

are unfolding," Hurvitz said. "Necessities will sell regardless. A lot of discretionary items won't."

With the onslaught of candidate advertisements in broadcast and print media, retailers also have fewer ad outlets to lure shoppers, especially in the so-called "battleground states" where the candidates are jockeying for Electoral College votes.

"It's the constant bombardment of seeing nothing that is really marketing products but instead selling candidates, so you're not just focusing on things you're buying," Beemer said. "You're thinking about who you're going to vote for president."

Some retailers try to draw shoppers in with Election Day sales and many retailers figure they'll make up the numbers later in the month.

"Traffic may drop slightly, but not enough to impact overall sales," said Quinton Crenshaw, a spokesman for J.C. Penney Co. Inc.

Other observers maintain that the election, even a tense one, remains a strong day for shopping.

An analysis by Bain & Co. Inc. in New York found that holiday sales in past years have been greater during an election year, although they're not sure why. But the analysts also pointed out that factors such as a slow-back-to-school season may test the theory this year.

"An election is no guarantee for a great year for retailers," said Darrell Rigby, head of Bain's global retail practice. "When you look at back-to-school sales, utility costs, bankruptcies, debt levels and consumer confidence levels there's no guarantee of a great year."

We believe this year will be solid, but not as strong as last year."

THURSDAY'S MARKET SUMMARY

INDEXES				
52-week	Low	High	Net Chg	% Chg
52-week	Low	High	Net Chg	% Chg
10,253.3	9,526.50	10,253.3	+177.1	+1.7
3,512.8	2,743.46	3,512.8	+68.20	+1.9
1,251.9	942.26	1,251.9	+21.54	+1.7
6,883.8	5,922.45	6,883.8	+95.80	+1.4
1,232.4	1,055.81	1,232.4	+17.59	+1.4
1,253.8	1,055.81	1,253.8	+19.82	+1.6
1,163.2	1,031.20	1,163.2	+18.47	+1.6
986.4	845.35	986.4	+40.77	+4.1
515.90	459.22	515.90	+56.68	+11.0
11,717.14	10,559.28	11,717.14	+1,157.86	+10.5

NYSE				
Most Active (\$1 or more)	Low	High	Net Chg	% Chg
Pfizer	807.22	25.06	+0.20	+0.8
United Therapeutics	487.70	1.57	+0.08	+5.1
Johnson & Johnson	981.88	24.26	+0.10	+0.4
Amgen	98.82	24.22	+0.01	+0.0
Merck	54.28	27.00	+0.01	+0.0
Novartis	21.11	34.09	+0.01	+0.0
Novartis	40.81	1.40	+0.01	+0.0
Novartis	11.05	1.15	+0.01	+0.0
Novartis	23.07	16.12	+0.01	+0.0
Novartis	19.94	2.24	+0.01	+0.0

KEY DEFENSE STOCKS				
Low	High	Net Chg	% Chg	52-week
41.25	61.25	+1.25	+3.0	+8.0
20.00	30.00	+0.00	+0.0	+0.0
30.00	50.00	+0.00	+0.0	+0.0
20.00	30.00	+0.00	+0.0	+0.0
20.00	30.00	+0.00	+0.0	+0.0
20.00	30.00	+0.00	+0.0	+0.0
20.00	30.00	+0.00	+0.0	+0.0
20.00	30.00	+0.00	+0.0	+0.0
20.00	30.00	+0.00	+0.0	+0.0
20.00	30.00	+0.00	+0.0	+0.0

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
British pound	\$1.2127
Canada (dollar)	\$1.5890
Japan yen (Nov. 6)	106.60
South Korean won (Nov. 5)	1,086.60
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (dinar)	0.37698
British pound	\$1.2127
Canada (dollar)	1.5890
Denmark (krone)	5.45
Euro (Euro)	0.7203
Hong Kong (dollar)	0.7788
Hungary (Forint)	190.63
Indonesia (rupiah)	1,561.3
Israel (Shekel)	4.425
Japan (yen)	106.60
Kuwait (dinar)	0.29429
Malaysia (ringgit)	0.667
Philippines (peso)	56.35
Saudi Arabia (riyal)	2.47
Singapore (dollar)	1.3667
South Korea (won)	1,113.30
Switzerland (franc)	1.12
Thailand (baht)	41.15
Turkey (lira)	1,453,000.00

NASDAQ				
Most Active (\$1 or more)	Low	High	Net Chg	% Chg
Microsoft	80.88	2.00	+0.30	+0.4
Intel	60.22	2.08	+0.10	+0.2
Cisco	49.00	1.00	+0.10	+0.2
Sun Microsystems	29.00	1.00	+0.10	+0.3
Qualcomm	66.00	1.00	+0.10	+0.2
Applied	29.00	1.00	+0.10	+0.3
Oracle	29.00	1.00	+0.10	+0.3
IBM	29.00	1.00	+0.10	+0.3
Microsoft	29.00	1.00	+0.10	+0.3
Microsoft	29.00	1.00	+0.10	+0.3

KEY MUTUAL FUNDS				
Low	High	Net Chg	% Chg	52-week
Fidelity Investor - Growth	32.46	+0.54	+1.7	+5.8
Fidelity Investor - Growth	32.46	+0.54	+1.7	+5.8
Fidelity Investor - Growth	32.46	+0.54	+1.7	+5.8
Fidelity Investor - Growth	32.46	+0.54	+1.7	+5.8
Fidelity Investor - Growth	32.46	+0.54	+1.7	+5.8
Fidelity Investor - Growth	32.46	+0.54	+1.7	+5.8
Fidelity Investor - Growth	32.46	+0.54	+1.7	+5.8
Fidelity Investor - Growth	32.46	+0.54	+1.7	+5.8
Fidelity Investor - Growth	32.46	+0.54	+1.7	+5.8
Fidelity Investor - Growth	32.46	+0.54	+1.7	+5.8

Cents and Sensibility

Money tip of the day

Auctioning items online

NEW YORK — You can make a bundle from selling your stuff on online auction sites.

If you don't have the time or experience to auction items yourself, try a service that will sell your items for you. Here are two such services:

■ **Auction Drop.** This service works with UPS for a commission of 20 percent to 38 percent of the item's selling price. To sell your items, fill out a form at www.auctiondrop.com. Drop your unpackaged items off at a participating UPS store and Auction Drop will take care of list-

ing, selling and sending the items. You'll receive a check — minus Auction Drop's take and e-Bay selling fees. If your item doesn't sell, it will be returned to you at no charge.

■ **Trading Assistants.** This eBay service pairs you with individual sellers on the auction Web site. Search for a trading assistant at www.ebay.com/ta by ZIP code or specialty. Each seller charges a different commission and has different guidelines for pickup or delivery. Trading assistants must be reputable sellers on eBay and must follow the Web site's guidelines for buying and selling.

PRECIOUS METALS

London close	
Gold — \$432.20	
Silver — \$7.44	

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	4.75
Discount rate	2.75
Federal funds market rate	1.875
3-month bill	1.97
30-year bond	4.52
Sources: The Associated Press, Bank of America	



KEY: Sunny Partly cloudy Mostly cloudy Cloudy Showers Tornadoes Rain Rain/snow Snow Cold front Warm front Trough Occluded front Stationary front Low High

AFRICA

Cape Town	78	HI	80	Mogadishu	85	HI	80
Dakar	78	HI	84	Nairobi	75	HI	80
Freetown	85	HI	75	Rabat	72	HI	83
Antananarivo	88	HI	71	Tripoli	73	HI	86

Amsterdam	54	HI	47	Manila	89	HI	79
Beijing	58	HI	47	Mexico City	54	HI	44
Buenos Aires	62	HI	38	Montreal	41	HI	32
Calcutta	82	HI	38	Riyadh	80	HI	68
Cardenas	79	HI	68	Rio de Janeiro	85	HI	72
Cebu	89	HI	77	Sao Paulo	85	HI	72
Chengdu	85	HI	77	Seoul	55	HI	41
Chongqing	82	HI	72	Singapore	72	HI	80
Chongqing	82	HI	72	Sydney	72	HI	80
Chongqing	82	HI	72	Sydney	72	HI	80

THE WORLD

Amsterdam	54	HI	47	Manila	89	HI	79
Beijing	58	HI	47	Mexico City	54	HI	44
Buenos Aires	62	HI	38	Montreal	41	HI	32
Calcutta	82	HI	38	Riyadh	80	HI	68
Cardenas	79	HI	68	Rio de Janeiro	85	HI	72
Cebu	89	HI	77	Sao Paulo	85	HI	72
Chengdu	85	HI	77	Seoul	55	HI	41
Chongqing	82	HI	72	Singapore	72	HI	80
Chongqing	82	HI	72	Sydney	72	HI	80

Chongqing	82	HI	72	Sydney	72	HI	80
Chongqing	82	HI	72	Sydney	72	HI	80

TODAY'S STATESIDE OUTLOOK

Alabama	78	HI	48	PC	Chesapeake	52	HI	33	PC	Hartford	57	HI	41	PC	New York City	59	HI	41	PC	San Francisco	62	HI	49	PC
Alaska	51	HI	41	PC	Idaho	59	HI	41	PC	Houston	77	HI	61	PC	Los Angeles	59	HI	41	PC	San Jose	88	HI	75	PC
Arizona	51	HI	41	PC	Illinois	59	HI	41	PC	Indianapolis	61	HI	41	PC	Las Vegas	59	HI	41	PC	Seattle	59	HI	41	PC
Arkansas	59	HI	41	PC	Indiana	61	HI	41	PC	Jacksonville	73	HI	41	PC	Little Rock	71	HI	41	PC	St. Louis	59	HI	41	PC
California	59	HI	41	PC	Iowa	59	HI	41	PC	Johnstown	73	HI	41	PC	Long Beach	62	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Colorado	59	HI	41	PC	Kansas	61	HI	41	PC	Juneau	73	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Connecticut	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Kenosha	73	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Delaware	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Knoxville	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
District of Columbia	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	La Crosse	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Florida	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Georgia	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Hawaii	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Idaho	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Illinois	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Indiana	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Iowa	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Kansas	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Kentucky	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Louisiana	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Maine	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Maryland	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Massachusetts	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Michigan	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Minnesota	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Mississippi	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Missouri	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Montana	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Nebraska	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Nevada	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
New Hampshire	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
New Jersey	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
New Mexico	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
New York	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
North Carolina	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
North Dakota	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Ohio	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Oklahoma	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Oregon	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Pennsylvania	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Rhode Island	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
South Carolina	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
South Dakota	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Tennessee	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Texas	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Utah	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Vermont	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Virginia	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Washington	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
West Virginia	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Wisconsin	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC
Wyoming	59	HI	41	PC	Kentucky	61	HI	41	PC	Lafayette	63	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC	Portland	59	HI	41	PC



MIDEAST

Mazhar-e-Sharif	73/43	HI	43	PC	New Delhi	85/56	HI	56	PC
Kabul	68/35	HI	35	PC	Hyderabad	80/68	HI	68	PC
Islamabad	79/51	HI	51	PC	Karachi	91/68	HI	68	PC
Kandahar	79/47	HI	47	PC	Bombay	92/71	HI	71	PC

Mazhar-e-Sharif	73/43	HI	43	PC	New Delhi	85/56	HI	56	PC
Kabul	68/35	HI	35	PC	Hyderabad	80/68	HI	68	PC
Islamabad	79/51	HI	51	PC	Karachi	91/68	HI	68	PC
Kandahar	79/47	HI	47	PC	Bombay	92/71	HI	71	PC

MIDEAST

Mazhar-e-Sharif	73/43	HI	43	PC	New Delhi	85/56	HI	56	PC
Kabul	68/35	HI	35	PC	Hyderabad	80/68	HI	68	PC
Islamabad	79/51	HI	51	PC	Karachi	91/68	HI	68	PC
Kandahar	79/47	HI	47	PC	Bombay	92/71	HI	71	PC

Mazhar-e-Sharif	73/43	HI	43	PC	New Delhi	85/56	HI	56	PC
Kabul	68/35	HI	35	PC	Hyderabad	80/68	HI	68	PC
Islamabad	79/51	HI	51	PC	Karachi	91/68	HI	68	PC
Kandahar	79/47	HI	47	PC	Bombay	92/71	HI	71	PC

Horoscope

We may say we're looking for spontaneous fun (especially now that Mercury is transiting through spur-of-the-moment Sagittarius), but under the Virgo moon, we're really more comfortable with a kind of planned spontaneity — sort of like the loose script producers give to people on reality shows. Be careful not to stifle creativity in the process.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(November 6.) You're living life fully this year, so you can expect your activities will be more colorful, varied and meaningful. Give in to a whim this month, and it leads straight to an extra source of income. Friends may be jealous of what you accomplish in December, so be sure to stay modest. You have a special connection with Aries and Cancer.

ARIES (March 21-April 19)

You concerned with issues of credibility. Check out the people you're dealing with to be sure they're on the level. Don't try too hard to convince others of your legitimacy, though, or you'll seem fishy!

TAURUS (April 20-May 20)

Give difficult people a second chance. Things work out better this year. A Chinese proverb says: There is but one pretty child in the world, and every parent has it. Be sure to praise and acknowledge children appropriately.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21)

Timing is crucial. Pick up the phone, and check e-mail often. Being there for your loved ones is the most significant gift you can give them now. Nothing is more important than showing up when your people would like you to be there.

CANCER (June 22-July 22)

You'll be here if you don't go for the quick fix. Make sure that what you're in charge of gets done the right way, even if it costs a little more. People ask for help, but be judicious. Don't throw your pearls to swine.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22)

Think of a goal you have had but have not started on, and do some initial

brainstorming about what it might take to get this show on the road. Use paper and pencil! You've got some intentions in writing, you've got nothing.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22)

You're lucky! Be careful not to get complacent, though. Self-development is essential if you want to evolve. It is too easy to put the responsibility in someone else's hands (the state lottery for instance).

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)

Part of you is wise to what the future brings, but the larger part of you is busy finding distractions. In doing so, you're able to deny that soon the hour will be upon you. Instead, make the effort to face impending situations head on.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21)

Groups probably won't function as well as they should now due to the fact that nobody wants to take charge. If you can't be the leader, make sure you at least do something to make the leader more accountable.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21)

Family dynamics are heightened. There are politics involved even between siblings and parents. Tricky situations require negotiation on your part. Stand back and study this for a while.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19)

Sparks fly between you and that special someone. Does this mean love? Well, it certainly means something, but be careful not to mistake physical chemistry for emotional commitment. The two are quite different!

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18)

You're trying to be stronger in your convictions and more disciplined in your activities. But the company you keep could cause counterproductive behavior on the self-improvement front. Recognize weakness.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20)

Things could get boring unless you're willing to shake it up and see life in a new way. Take a step back and view your choices with a philosophical standpoint. You're guided by principles.

Creators Syndicate

Holiday Mathis



Calvin and Hobbes

I STAND FIRM IN MY BELIEF OF WHAT'S RIGHT. I REFUSE TO COMPROMISE MY PRINCIPLES!



I DON'T NEED TO COMPROMISE MY PRINCIPLES. BECAUSE THEY DON'T HAVE THE SLIGHTEST BEARING ON WHAT HAPPENS TO ME ANYWAY.



Jump Start



Zits



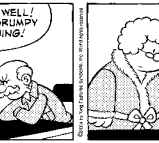
Cathy



Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



Red Rover



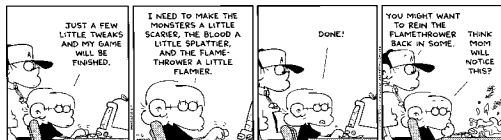
Better or Worse



Peanuts



Footrot



B.C.



Baby Blues



Spider Man



Blondie



Dilbert



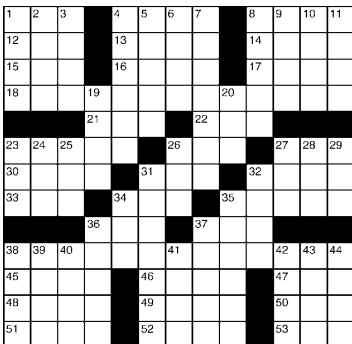
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 Itsy-bitsy
- 4 Fedora feature
- 8 Crazy
- 12 Aries
- 13 Modicum
- 14 Toast topper
- 15 Body part
- 16 Punch
- 17 Prospector's hope
- 18 Isn't steady?
- 21 ODE opponent
- 22 Weeding tool
- 23 Bee's product
- 26 Bee's product
- 27 Spigot
- 30 Incite
- 31 Festive
- 32 Leslie Caron film
- 33 Even the slightest
- 34 Not very interesting
- 35 Bourbon recipe
- 36 Derivative exclamation
- 37 Fa follower
- 38 Takes a big risk
- 45 Hideaway
- 46 Zhivago's love
- 47 Benicio — Toro
- 48 Negate
- 49 Cardinal O'Connor's successor
- 50 "A mouse!"
- 51 Penn or Young
- 52 Low
- 53 Commercial
- 2 Dixie Chicks' "Goodbye —"
- 3 Jane Austen heroine
- 4 "The Deep" actress
- 5 Haley book
- 6 Pruritus
- 7 Take advantage of the situation
- 8 Orphaned calf
- 9 Lotion additive
- 10 Toppled
- 11 Film director
- 19 Bush and Clinton have it in common
- 20 "Arrested Development" network
- 23 Sine-non link
- 24 Columbarium item
- 25 July 1957 to Dec. 1958, in sci. news
- 26 Method
- 27 Up to (Var.)
- 28 Time of your life?
- 29 "Great Expectations" hero
- 31 Made an animal sound
- 32 Wide gap
- 34 Two, in Tijuana
- 35 Part of J.S.B.
- 36 "Darkness" poet
- 37 Back-breaker?
- 38 Asset
- 39 Freeway division
- 40 Verdi opera
- 41 Othello's foe
- 42 Concept
- 43 Saxophonist's need
- 44 Mooselike herd

Answer to Previous Puzzle



Down

- 1 Prepare for shipment

11-6

CRYPTOQUIP

PE Z MNGBIXF QXOPQXY
KV JV EVF YVBXKDPWJ
FPYLR, OVGNO RVG YZR

DX KZLXY KDX MNGWJXF?
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: SOME WESTERN TOWN RESIDENTS BECAME MORE COURAGEOUS, CREATING A BOLDER COLORADO.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: F equals R

SCOREBOARD

AFN TV & Radio

Saturday

AFN-Sports, 8 p.m. — College football: Air Force football with Fisher (see Perry).
AFN-Sports, 9 a.m. — College football: NASCAR Truck Chevy Silverado 1500 race.
AFN-Sports, 6 p.m. — College football: Marshall at Akron (old).
AFN-Sports, 6 p.m. — College football: Ohio St. at Michigan St.
AFN-Sports, 6 p.m. — College football: Virginia Tech at North Carolina.
AFN-Pacific, 6:30 p.m. — College football: Georgia Tech at North Carolina St. (joined in pregame).
AFN-Sports, 9:30 p.m. — College football: Miami at Texas A&M.
AFN-Pacific, 9:30 p.m. — College football: Marquette at Wisconsin.
AFN-Atlantic, 9:30 p.m. — College football: Notre Dame at Tennessee.

Sunday

AFN-Pacific, 9:30 a.m. — College football: Oklahoma State at Texas.
AFN-Sports, 6 a.m. — Auto racing: NASCAR Busch Series, Bushes' Supermarkets 200.
AFN-Sports, 9 a.m. — Golf: PGA Tour: Champions, third round (old).
AFN-Atlantic, 9 a.m. — College football: Oregon at California (old).
AFN-Sports, 1:30 p.m. — College football: Maryland at Virginia Tech.
AFN-Pacific, 1:30 p.m. — NFL: N.Y. Jets at Buffalo.
AFN-Atlantic, 7 p.m. — NFL: Philadelphia at Pittsburgh.
AFN-Sports, 9:30 p.m. — Auto racing: NASCAR Busch Series, Auto Parts 500.
AFN-Pacific, 9:30 p.m. — NFL: New England at Kansas City.
AFN-Atlantic, 10 p.m. — NFL: New Orleans at Atlanta.

All times Central European time; det indicates delayed broadcast. All listings are approximate. Some local broadcasts not available in all areas. Visit www.afn.net for more information.

Pro football

NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE						
	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
East						
New England	6	1	0	.857	168	124
N.Y. Jets	6	1	0	.857	168	116
Buffalo	5	2	0	.667	126	115
Miami	1	7	0	.125	100	162
South						
Jacksonville	5	3	0	.625	128	146
Houston	4	3	0	.571	158	143
Indianapolis	4	3	0	.571	218	178
Tennessee	3	5	0	.375	151	178
North						
Pittsburgh	6	1	0	.857	170	134
Baltimore	4	3	0	.571	127	100
Cleveland	4	3	0	.429	147	147
Cincinnati	2	5	0	.286	126	166
West						
Denver	5	3	0	.625	168	141
San Diego	4	4	0	.500	219	199
Kansas City	4	4	0	.429	206	177

Top teams face final road tests

Southern Cal, Oklahoma take perfect records into Corvallis, College Station

By RALPH D. RUSSO
The Associated Press

The list of unbeatens is down to six with a month left in the regular season.

No. 1 Southern California, No. 2 Oklahoma, No. 5 Wisconsin and No. 7 Utah are all favored to stay perfect Saturday.

College Picks

Miami's loss to North Carolina last week served as a reminder to the top teams that it's hard to hide flaws in conference games, especially on the road.

USC seems to be gaining momentum every week. Since winning back-to-back close games at Stanford and against California, the Trojans have outscored opponents 125-19.

Now they go to Oregon State, which has won three straight against some of the Pac-10's weaklings.

Corvallis is unfamiliar territory for the Trojans. They haven't played there since 2000, when the Beavers broke a 26-game losing streak to USC with a 31-21 victory. But that was before coach Pat Carroll arrived in Los Angeles.

"It presents new challenges because we have not been there before. We are accustomed to the format of the trip, but you don't know something until you go to it," Carroll said.

In 1967, Oregon State knocked off No. 1 USC and O.J. Simpson 3-0 in Corvallis, one of the greatest upsets in school history.

Oklahoma barely escaped Stillwater with a 38-35 victory over Oklahoma State last Saturday. Texas A&M awaits the Sooners in College Station.

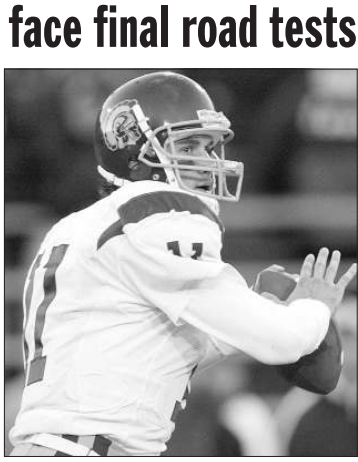
"We have to come out in a very tough Big 12 South setting at Texas A&M and improve in some areas," Sooners coach Bob Stoops said.

The Aggies slipped up last week at Baylor, but they've been waiting all week to even the worst loss in Big 12 history.

Oklahoma beat Texas A&M 77-0 in 2003.

Wisconsin appears to have an easier task at home against slumping Minnesota, which has lost three of four. But this is a rivalry game in the Big Ten, with Paul Bunyan's ax going to the winner.

Utah has been storming through its Mountain West Conference rivals — next up is Colorado State. Coach Sonny Lubick's Rams were the league's kingpin until coach Urban Meyer moved to Salt Lake City. The teams (3-5, 2-2) are in danger of having their first losing season since 1993, Lubick's first in Fort Collins.



Matt Leinart, 20-1 as USC's starting quarterback, has thrown 16 TD passes and four interceptions and has a passer rating of 151.0 this season. The top-ranked Trojans, who have won 17 consecutive games, do not leave their home state after Saturday's game at Oregon State. They finish the regular season against Arizona, Notre Dame and UCLA.

Auburn (9-0) and Boise State (8-0) are off this week.

The picks:
No. 1 Southern Cal (minus 18) at Oregon State: USC's last game outside Los Angeles ... **USC 37-10.**

No. 2 Oklahoma (minus 12) at No. 22 Texas A&M: Revenge couldn't get much sweeter ... **TEXAS A&M 31-27.**

Oregon (plus 21) at No. 4 California: Ducks have won four straight after going 1-3 ... **CALIFORNIA 34-21.**

Minnesota (plus 6½) at No. 5 Wisconsin: Healthy Badgers defense greets Gophers ... **WISCONSIN 24-13.**

No. 19 Oklahoma State (plus 12½) at No. 6 Texas: Now here's an Oklahoma team the Longhorns can handle ... **TEXAS 34-20.**

Colorado State (plus 26½) at

No. 7 Utah: Rams had won five straight against Utah before last season's loss ... **UTAH 48-17.**

No. 8 Georgia (minus 24) at Kentucky: Bulldogs gearing up for Auburn ... **GEORGIA 33-13.**

Notre Dame (plus 7) at No. 9 Tennessee: Irish's last three opponents are combined 20-3 ... **TENNESSEE 28-14.**

Clemson (plus 17) at No. 11 Miami: Canes still smarting ...

MIAMI 34-23.
Maryland (plus 14) at No. 12 Virginia: Cavaliers have renewed hopes for ACC title ... **VIRGINIA 29-6.**

Duke (plus 31) at No. 13 Florida State: QB Chris Rix back to the helm for FSU ... **FLORIDA STATE 44-10.**

Temple (plus 28) at No. 15 West Virginia: Good time for Mountaineers to break troublesome streak ... **WEST VIRGINIA 45-10.**

No. 18 Virginia Tech (minus 10) at North Carolina: Tar Heels face better defense this week ... **MIDDLE TENNESSEE 41-6.**

Purdue (no line) at No. 20 Iowa: QB Kyle Orton (hip) might not play for Purdue ... **IOWA 15-12.**

Cincinnati (plus 5½) at No. 21 Southern Mississippi: Golden Eagles keep pace with Louisville in C-USA ... **SOUTHERN MISS 38-13.**

Stanford (plus 10½) at No. 23 Arizona State: Cardinal offense is struggling as bad as Sun Devils' D ... **ARIZONA STATE 31-14.**

Rutgers (plus 14½) at No. 24 Boston College: BC looking to big game against West Virginia ... **BOSTON COLLEGE 34-23.**

Last week: 12-7 (straight); 8-10-1 (vs. points).

Season: 135-37 (straight); 84-77-4 (vs. points).

College football schedule/statistics

Weekend schedule

Saturday, Nov. 6

Columbia (1-6) at Harvard (7-0)
Massachusetts (4-5) at Northeastern (3-5)
Northwestern (4-4) at Penn State (2-4)
New Hampshire (5-2) at Rhode Island (4-4)
Pittsburgh (4-4) at Syracuse (4-4)
Yale (4-1) at Brown (4-1)
Lafayette (6-2) at Colgate (5-3)
Lehigh (1-1) at Georgetown (0-5, 2-6)
Marist (3-5) at Holy Cross (1-7)
Air Force (3-5) at Army (2-5)
Fordham (5-3) at Bucknell (4-4)
Air Force (4-5) at Cent. Connecticut (2-6)
Dartmouth (5-2) at Cornell (2-5)
St. Peter's (7-2) at Iona (2-6)
Duquesne (5-2) at La Salle (1-6)
Sacred Heart (3-4) at Monmouth, N.J. (8-1)
Penn (6-3) at Princeton (4-3)
Wagner (5-2) at St. Francis, Pa. (3-6)
Temple (7-1) at West Virginia (7-4)
Kent St. (2-6) at Buffalo (1-7)
Albany, N.Y. (4-5) at Robert Morris (5-4)
Hofstra (4-4) at Maine (4-4)
Rutgers (4-4) at Boston College (5-2)

SOUTH

Georgia Tech (4-3) at N.C. State (4-4)
Virginia Tech (6-2) at North Carolina (4-4)
Duke (7-1) at Florida St. (2-5)
Savannah St. (5-2) at Coastal Carolina (7-1)
Louisiana (5-2) at Jacksonville (5-3)
Arkansas (3-4) at Oklahoma (5-3)
Georgia (7-3) at Kentucky (1-7)
Charleston, W.Va. (3-6) at Morehead St. (5-4)
Morgan St. (3-5) at North Ark. (4-4)
Towson (3-3) at Richmond (2-6)
LSU (4-4) at Tenn.-Martin (2-7)
Liberty (3-5) at VMI (0-9)
Villanova (6-3) at William & Mary (6-2)
Albion (4-0) at Charleston Southern (7-1)
Delaware (6-2) at James Madison (7-1)
Howard (5-3) at S. Carolina (5-2)
Gardner-Webb (3-5) at Wofford (6-2)
Etna (2-6) at Appalachian St. (6-2)
Davidson (2-6) at Austin Peay (1-7)
Georgia Southern (8-1) at Furman (6-2)
Bethune-Cookman (5-2) at Hampton (7-1)
Alcorn St. (2-6) at MSU (2-5)
Chattanooga (4-4) at The Citadel (1-6)
Florida (4-4) at Vanderbilt (3-5)
Alabama St. (6-1) at Grambling St. (4-4)
Cincinnati (4-4) at Southern Miss. (5-3)
E. Illinois (4-4) at Tennessee Tech (5-3)
North Carolina A&T (4-4) at N.C. Central (4-4)
Maryland (4-4) at Virginia (6-1)
Ohio (3-4) at UCF (0-8)
Alabama A&M (4-4) at Jackson St. (6-2)
Norfolk St. (4-4) at Johnson S.C. (6-2)
Texas State (4-4) at Jacksonville St. (5-3)
Sam Houston St. (5-2) at Austin S.C. (5-2)
Way (7-1) at Tulane (5-2)
Georgia Southern (8-1) at Nicholls St. (3-3)
Stephen F. Austin (2-6) at Miami (2-5)
Miss. Southern (2-6) at Tennessee St. (3-5)

MIDWEST

Ohio St. (4-3) at Michigan St. (4-4)
Kent St. (2-6) at Michigan (7-1)
Upper Iowa (2-7) at Drake (7-2)
Ball State (3-5) at Valparaiso (5-3)
N. Iowa (4-4) at Indiana St. (4-5)
Ill. State (4-4) at Kansas (4-4)
Indiana (3-5) at Illinois (2-7)
Iowa (4-4) at Iowa St. (4-4)
Augustana, Ill. (3-5) at Dakota St. (4-4)
W. Kentucky (4-4) at SIU Edwardsville (4-4)
Youngstown St. (3-6) at W. Illinois (4-5)
North Dakota St. (3-5) at S.D. State (4-4)
Purdue (5-3) at Iowa St. (2-6)
Nebraska (5-3) at Wisconsin (8-1)
Nebraska (5-3) at Wisconsin (8-1)
North Dakota St. (3-5) at S.D. State (4-4)
Cent. Michigan (3-5) vs. E. Michigan (3-3) at Detroit

SOUTHWEST

Baylor (5-3) at Texas Tech (5-3)
Prairie View (3-5) at Ark.-Pine Bluff (5-2)
Fresno St. (4-4) at Rice (4-4)
Tulsa (2-6) at SMU (1-7)
Colorado St. (3-5) at Texas Tech (5-3)
Oklahoma (5-3) at Texas A&M (6-2)
New Mexico St. (4-4) at New Mexico (4-4)
Oklahoma St. (6-2) at Texas Tech (5-3)

PAC WEST

N. Arizona (4-4) at Montana (6-2)
Utah St. (4-4) at Colorado St. (4-4)
San Diego St. (4-4) at BYU (4-4)
N. Dakota St. (3-5) at Weber St. (1-8)
Oregon St. (3-5) at California (6-1)
Washington St. (5-3) at UCLA (5-3)
N. Washington (3-5) at Washington St. (5-3)
Cal Poly-SLO (7-1) vs. E. Washington (6-3)
Ark.-Mesa (2-5) vs. Idaho (0-7) at Pullman, Wash.
Stanford (4-4) at Arizona St. (6-2)
Idaho St. (4-4) at Portland St. (6-2)
Middle Tennessee (4-4) at New Mexico St. (2-5)
Wyoming (5-3) at UNLV (2-6)
San Jose St. (2-6) at Nevada (4-4)
Idaho St. (4-4) at Utah St. (4-4)
Southern Cal (8-0) at Oregon St. (4-4)
Dayton (7-2) at San Diego St. (4-4)
Louisiana Tech (4-4) at Hawaii (3-4)

Division I-A statistics

Total offense

Louisville 354 3970 4563
Utah 348 3970 4563
Arkansas 348 3970 4563
California 348 3970 4563
Toledo 348 3970 4563
Bowling Green 348 3970 4563
Northwestern 348 3970 4563
Oklahoma 348 3970 4563
Michigan 348 3970 4563
Texas A&M 348 3970 4563
Connecticut 348 3970 4563
UCLA 348 3970 4563

Rushing offense

Car 348 3970 4563
Texas 348 3970 4563
Rice 348 3970 4563
Minnesota 348 3970 4563

West Virginia 397 2108 2635
Oklahoma St. 419 2636 2545
Virginia 397 2108 2635
Air Force 447 1980 2475
California 296 1707 2469
Northwestern 421 2281 2341
Michigan 394 1858 2323
Utah 270 1703 2283
Louisville 398 2205 2211
Boise St. 396 1808 2260

Passing offense

Att C Yds Pts
Texas Tech 442 2095 2111 336
Hawaii 247 1193 1287 214
Bowling Green 399 209 2572 391
Purdue 399 209 2572 391
Connecticut 399 209 2572 391
Oregon 399 209 2572 391
Rutgers 399 209 2572 391
Fla. Atlantic 323 138 2108 294
Louisville 323 138 2108 294
Brigham Young 321 176 2284 283
Arizona St. 318 174 2284 283
Miami (Ohio) 318 174 2284 283
Louisville 318 174 2284 283
Colorado St. 278 166 2196 2745

Total defense

Plays Yds Pts
Alabama 499 1891 2363
Wisconsin 504 1905 2111
Southern California 516 2045 2546
Auburn 559 2382 2656
Purdue 564 2411 2656
Virginia Tech 514 2203 2753
Michigan 514 2203 2753
Iowa 514 2203 2753
Louisville 514 2203 2753
Florida St. 514 2203 2753
Marshall 514 2203 2753
California 499 1891 2363
Boston College 499 1891 2363

Rushing defense

Car Yds Pts
Boise St. 205 813 64
Florida St. 205 813 64
Iowa 242 568 71
Southern California 242 568 71
California 242 568 71
Troy 309 736 92.0
Louisville 318 744 92.0
North Carolina 318 744 92.0
Notre Dame 277 719 90.1
Boston College 277 719 90.1
Oregon 277 719 90.1
Auburn 307 915 101.7

Passing defense

Att C Yds Pts
Alabama 250 1198 4 88.36
Wisconsin 250 1198 4 88.36
Iowa 215 1241 4 96.69
Virginia Tech 215 1241 4 96.69
Southern California 214 1500 4 96.69
Oregon 263 1217 16 100.44
Oregon 263 1217 16 100.44
Southern Miss. 176 863 16 98.40
Louisville 186 94 1291 7 101.87
Marshall 186 94 1291 7 101.87
Boston College 200 1237 18 102.48
Michigan 200 1237 18 102.48

Div. I-A individual statistics

Running

Plays C Yds Avg Yds Pt
Thomas, Mo. Texas 192 1215 6.3 17.6
Grady, Texas Tech 192 1215 6.3 17.6
Peterson, Oklahoma 210 1272 6.1 15.9
Benson, Texas 210 1272 6.1 15.9
Moreno, Okla. 207 1266 6.1 15.8
Cris, Texas Tech 207 1266 6.1 15.8
Wolfe, N.C. State 198 1247 6.3 13.8
Dorsey, Memphis 198 1247 6.3 13.8
Harris, Michigan 220 1180 5.3 12.6
Jones, Army 192 1215 6.3 17.6
Dorsey, Memphis 198 1247 6.3 13.8
Sproles, Kansas St. 198 1247 6.3 13.8
Maroney, Minnesota 198 1247 6.3 13.8
Seymour, Cent. Mich. 184 903 4.9 11.29
Brundage, Washington 184 903 4.9 11.29

Passing

Att C Yds Tds Rtg
Lefors, Louisville 116 89 1164 17.92
Grady, Toledo 251 81 2386 19 102.8
Smith, Utah 203 131 1905 20 101.6
Dayton, S.D. State 173 86 1474 19.8
Hackney, UAB 189 102 1716 17.6
Rogers, S.D. State 173 86 1474 19.8
Jacobs, Bowling Green 301 206 2523 23 136.0
Marshall, W. Virginia 173 86 1474 19.8
White, Oklahoma 223 48 2320 19.8
Sagar, UAB 173 86 1474 19.8
Greene, Georgia 208 121 1746 15 105.1
Leach, UAB 173 86 1474 19.8
Marks, Middle Tenn. 272 202 2315 15.16
Orton, Purdue 173 223 21 150.0
Harris, Michigan 219 180 17 146.6

Receiving

Gms C Yds Pt Ctg
Ridgeway, Ball State 9 90 1033 10.0
Wright, Middle Tenn. 9 69 69 7.7
Moses, Rutgers 9 69 69 7.7
Edwards, Idaho 9 69 69 7.7
Edwards, E. Michigan 9 69 69 7.7
Flowers, Hawaii 9 57 74 7.1
Sagar, San Diego St. 9 57 74 7.1
Glover, Texas Tech 9 56 59 7.0
Jennings, W. Michigan 9 55 80 6.9
Harris, Washington 9 54 111 6.8
Hicks, Texas Tech 9 53 93 6.4

Battered Army, Air Force try to salvage poor years

By MARK JOHNSON

The Associated Press

WEST POINT, N.Y. — Army coach Bobby Ross knew Saturday's game against Air Force is crucial for both schools.

And he's looking forward to it. Air Force (3-5), having lost four of its last five games, needs to win its three remaining games to avoid its first losing record since 1993 and its second overall in Fisher DeBerry's 21 seasons as coach.

Army (2-5), on the other hand, hasn't had a winning season since going 10-2 in 1996. That was also the last year the Black Knights beat the Falcons. Army has to win its remaining four games to avoid another losing campaign.

"It's a very important football game," Ross said. "It's a test of our character, a test of our will, on both sides. It's the kind of game I enjoy coaching. I'm looking forward to the challenge."

"I do feel we will be ready to play."

DeBerry expressed similar feelings, noting the schools' long-standing competition.

"It is somewhat of a conference to us, a second conference," he said. "Service academy games and rivalries are very special."

We're looking forward to going back to New York and getting back on the winning track."

The Falcons have dominated Army in recent years, winning seven in a row and 14 of 15. Air Force beat Army 31-3 at Colorado Springs last season and has outscored the Black Knights 242-91 over the past seven games.

Air Force enters this week's game with the nation's eighth-ranked running game, amassing 248 yards a contest. Five backs have rushed for at least 200 yards.

The Falcons' triple option offense controls the ball an average of 32 minutes a game.

"The offense is very deceptive," Ross said. "You have to be very good at responsibility on defense. We have to make sure we play with great discipline."

Both teams have struggled mightily on defense, with Army dead last among the 117 major college teams with a yield of 515 yards a game. Air Force is only slightly better, ranking 97th at 428.5 yards allowed.

Army is also 114th in rushing defense (241.7 yards a game), 112th in pass defense (273.6) and 107th in scoring defense (35.7 points a game).

The Falcons are allowing 33.3 points (98th), 203.1 rushing yards (99th) and 223.8 passing yards (72nd) per game.

DeBerry, looking to give his team a spark, is starting junior quarterback Adam Fitch in place of freshman Shaun Carney, who has at times struggled with his passing and option choices. It will be Fitch's first start.

The Falcons dropped a 43-26 decision to Wyoming last Saturday.

Army ended what was then the nation's longest losing streak at 19 games with a 48-29 victory over Cincinnati on Oct. 9, then came back the next week to beat South Florida 42-35. Army is coming off a 38-28 loss to East Carolina last week.

Army is led by Carlton Jones, 10th nationally in rushing at 121 yards a game.

Also at stake in Saturday's contest is a possible share of the Commander in Chief's trophy, awarded to the winner of the round-robin tournament among the service academies. Navy, which won the trophy last year, has the upper hand this season by virtue of a 24-21 victory over Air Force. Navy can retain the trophy outright by beating Army on Dec. 4 in Philadelphia.



East Carolina's Bobby Good (25) grabs the ball away from Army defender Ray Suth (25) during the Black Knights' 38-28 loss last Saturday.

No. 14 Louisville taken to the limit by Memphis

By COLIN FLY

The Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Louisville and Memphis marched up and down the field all night. All it took to decide the game was Eric Shelton's 1-yard plunge.

Shelton got into the end zone with 37 seconds left Thursday night, allowing 14th-ranked Louisville to escape with a 56-49 victory.

The teams combined for 105 points and 1,202 yards of offense, with 15 plays of more than 20 yards.

Louisville, the nation's top offensive team at 506.5 yards a game, was outgained despite rolling up 599 yards. Memphis (5-3, 2-3 Conference USA) finished with 603, including 361 through the air.

Shelton ran for 136 yards and four touchdowns and Stefan LeFors threw for three scores and 321 yards for Louisville (6-1, 4-0).

"It was unbelievable. It was a blast," LeFors said. "It was a great game for this team. We pulled through it and it showed a lot about this team's character."

"I wish we could have put up some more points and won the game. I really don't know what to say," Memphis quarterback Danny Wimprine said. "It was a fun game to be in. We did some things that were good to see on national TV, but you hate to lose one like that."



Louisville defenders surround Memphis quarterback Danny Wimprine during the second half Thursday night.

LeFors, the nation's passing-efficiency leader, wasn't as sharp as his 76 percent season completion rate, but he still hit on 24 of 34 attempts and three first-half touchdowns without a turnover.

It was a wild game that featured 10 lead changes, the last

when Shelton scored to put the Cardinals ahead 54-49. LeFors ran for the 2-point conversion, but the game wasn't over until Louisville's Abe Brown intercepted a pass to seal it with 21 seconds left.

"It was a big night for us on the

national stage. We earned the right to be here," Memphis coach Tommy West said. "When we had them on third down, we could not stop them. I think we just whipped on defense."

Louisville, 9-for-13 on third-down conversions, took a

48-40 lead after consecutive touchdown runs by Shelton, the second with 11:54 remaining.

Memphis answered when Wimprine, who threw for four touchdowns and 361 yards, ran in from the 1 to make it 48-46. The Tigers failed on a 2-point conversion attempt.

Memphis forced a turnover when Shelton fumbled a handoff with 7:36 left, and Wimprine went back to work on the Tigers 39.

He led his team to the Louisville 9, but after a penalty, two incomplete passes and a 2-yard run by DeAngelo Williams, Memphis settled for Stephen Gostkowski's 29-yard field goal and a 49-48 lead with 6:20 left.

That was plenty of time for LeFors, who gave the Cardinals their seventh play of more than 20 yards when he found J.R. Russell for a 28-yard completion to the Memphis 27. Russell finished with 146 yards and two TDs on seven catches.

The Cardinals then ran the ball four straight times as the clock ran down under a minute, and Memphis couldn't stop Shelton from scoring the winning touchdown.

The second half was downright slow after a frantic first half that featured 68 points and 703 yards of offense.

The teams scored on five consecutive possessions, and there were only two punts — on the Cardinals' first and last possessions of the half.

Johnson in hot pursuit in Chase for the Cup

After three consecutive wins, driver moves from ninth to second in points

BY MIKE HARRIS

The Associated Press

AVONDALE, Ariz. — The age-old NASCAR ethic of hard work and patience has helped Jimmie Johnson win three straight races and put him back in the Nextel Cup championship picture.

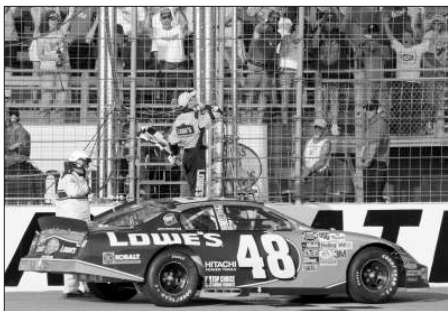
"We've had to work on our cars each and every race in the last three that we've won and we got it right at the end when it counted," Johnson said.

"It's a lesson we've been through before but, for whatever reason, certain lessons keep surfacing: If we're not the best car in the beginning, it doesn't matter. You just keep working on it."

The consecutive victories at Charlotte, Martinsville and Atlanta have elevated Johnson from ninth place, 247 points off the lead after crashing in the Kansas race on Oct. 10, to second, just 59 points behind Kurt Busch.

Johnson isn't dwelling on his recent success, though. He'd prefer to look ahead to the three races left in the season.

"It's not my style to sit and talk about what we've accomplished. If we're not paying attention to what took place or where we're at, things always work out better for us," Johnson said. "So, it's been a great run of races. We'll just keep plugging away."



Jimmie Johnson, seeking his first points title, celebrates with fans atop his Chevrolet after winning last weekend at Atlanta Motor Speedway. No driver has won four straight races in NASCAR's top circuit since Jeff Gordon in 1998. Johnson was ninth in points a month ago.

A victory Sunday in the Checker Auto Parts 500 at Phoenix International Raceway would make Johnson the first driver to win four in a row since teammate, friend and car owner Jeff Gordon did it in 1998.

Johnson's charge, combined with the first slip by Busch since the 10-race Chase began, has injected some real drama back into NASCAR's new championship format.

Thanks to Busch's blown engine at Atlanta, where he wound up 42nd — the first time he finished outside the top six since the Chase began — the top five drivers are bunched within 98 points with only Phoenix, Darlington and Homestead remaining on the schedule.

Four-time champion Gordon, four-time series runner-up Mark Martin and fan fa-

Nextel Cup glance

Driver Standings

1. Kurt Busch	6,052
2. Jimmie Johnson	5,993
3. Jeff Gordon	5,980
4. Mark Martin	5,971
5. Dale Earnhardt Jr.	5,554
6. Tony Stewart	5,507
7. Ryan Newman	5,866
8. Elliott Sadler	5,815
9. Matt Kenseth	5,795
10. Jeremy Mayfield	5,736

Schedule

Nov. 7 — Checker Auto Parts 500, Avondale, Ariz.
Nov. 14 — Mountain Dew 500, Darlington, S.C.
Nov. 21 — Ford 400, Homestead, Fla.

vorite Dale Earnhardt Jr., who beat Johnson in last year's race, all remain solidly in the hunt coming to Phoenix, where there have been 14 winners in the 16 years that NASCAR has raced there. Only the late Davey Allison (1991 and 1992) and Jeff Burton (2000 and 2001) have won more than once on the one-mile oval.

Gordon, who has wins at 19 of the 23 tracks currently on the Cup schedule, has never won at Phoenix.

"We always seem to run well here," he said. "We just haven't closed the deal."

Gordon trails Busch by 72 points but a victory Sunday would go a long way toward earning him a fifth championship.

"The opportunity is still there, we just need to take advantage of it," Gordon said. "I love to see that No. 48 team [Johnson] doing so well but, as a competitor, we need to stop his momentum and gain some of our own. The best way to do that is to win this weekend."

Busch hopes to have something to say about that, too.

"We stumbled this past week, but we've got three more to go and they're great race tracks for us," he said.

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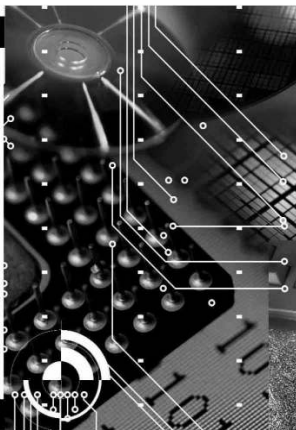
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Backman fired by D-backs

Manager let go after four days because of past legal problems

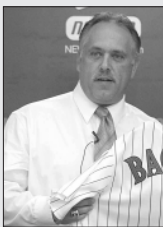
BY BOB BAUM
The Associated Press

PHOENIX — Just four days after he was hired, Arizona Diamondbacks manager Wally Backman was fired Friday following revelations he was arrested twice and struggled with financial problems.

Former Seattle manager Bob Melvin will replace Backman. Melvin, fired by the Mariners the day after the season ended, was Bob Brenly's bench coach on Arizona's World Series championship team of 2001.

Arizona's management had been unaware of Backman's problems until media reports that followed his hiring. Diamondbacks officials said they failed to do a criminal or financial background check on Backman.

"It's obviously a mistake on our part to have made a decision without having done the proper background work," managing partner Ken Kendrick said. "I take full responsibility for that." Backman, Sporting News minor league manager of the year this season, had agreed Monday to a two-year contract.



Wally Backman, who agreed Monday to a two-year contract with the Diamondbacks, was fired after the team learned of his arrests in 2000 and 2001 and his past financial problems.

After Backman's problems were first revealed, Arizona said it would stick with him. But, after several days, the team changed its mind and said it was withdrawing the offer.

"He's very disappointed but he understands and respects our decision," Kendrick said.

Backman was arrested in 2001 after a fight at his home involving his wife and one of her friends in Prineville, Ore. He pleaded guilty to misdemeanor harassment and was sentenced to 12 months' probation, ordered to undergo an anger management evaluation and donate \$1,000 to the local Boys and Girls Club.

He was arrested on a driving under the influence charge in Kennewick, Wash., in 2000. He pleaded guilty after fighting that charge for two years.

Backman has also had financial problems, filing for bankruptcy several years ago.

Melvin was let go by Seattle and replaced by Mike Hargrove after the Mariners went 63-99.

Ortiz drives in two as MLB takes first in series vs. Japan

BY ROB SMAAL
The Associated Press

TOKYO — David Ortiz picked up where he left off — this time on the other side of the world.

Ortiz, who helped lead the Boston Red Sox to their first World Series title since 1918, drove in two runs Friday at Tokyo Dome to lead a team of major league stars to a 7-2 victory over Japanese counterparts in the opener of an eight-game exhibition series.

Kiko Calero of the St. Louis Cardinals got the win for the major league stars, working just one-third of an inning in relief of starter Roger Clemens. San Diego Padres closer Akinori Otsuka pitched a perfect ninth to wrap things up for the visitors in his return to Japan.

Toronto's Vernon Wells also had a pair of RBIs, while Moises Alou of the Chicago Cubs and Texas' Hank Blalock both went 3-for-5.

Clemens went 4 1/3 innings in his first action since taking the loss in Game 7 of the NLCS, when his Houston Astros lost 5-2 to the Cardinals. The Rocket looked rusty at times Friday, struggling with his control and walking four. He allowed four hits and two runs, while striking out four.

"I did as much as I could out there," said the 42-year-old Clemens. "I was pleased after not touching a ball for a few weeks. I was just glad to get through that game."

Earlier in the day, Clemens and Pittsburgh Pirates shortstop Jack Wilson spent some time at a Tokyo elementary school, taking part in calligraphy classes and a Japanese tea ceremony. Clemens thrilled a class of fifth graders when he passed his 2000 New York Yankees World Series ring



MLB All-Stars starting pitcher Roger Clemens of the Houston Astros walked four, allowed four hits and two runs, and struck out four against the Japanese team, but got no decision. The MLB stars won 7-2.

around the room.

"Hopefully, one day Hideki Matsui will bring one of these home," Clemens said of his former teammate on the Yankees.

The teams play Saturday and Sunday in Tokyo before hitting the road for games in Fukuoka, Osaka, Sapporo and Nagoya. The series winds up back in Tokyo on Nov. 14.

Cards' Williams files for free agency

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — St. Louis Cardinals pitcher Woody Williams filed for free agency Thursday after the team told his agent it would decline his \$8 million option and pay him a \$900,000 buyout.

San Francisco left-hander Jason Christensen and Montreal third baseman Tony Batista also were among the six players who filed, raising the total to 196. Up to 15 additional players are eligible to file by Nov. 11 deadline.

Williams went 11-8 with a 4.18 ERA, helping St. Louis to the best regular-season record in the major leagues and the NL pennant before the Cardinals were swept by the Boston Red Sox in the World Series.

The 38-year-old right-hander had the fewest wins of any member of the rotation during the regular season, but he wound up being St. Louis' No. 1 starter in the postseason because of Chris Carpenter's arm injury and Matt Morris' inconsistency.

The Cardinals won 16 of Williams' last 19 regular-season

MLB briefs

starts. He won twice in the playoffs but lost Game 1 of the World Series.

Williams has also pitched for Toronto and San Diego during a 12-year major league career, going 103-84 with a 4.08 ERA. St. Louis acquired him from the Padres in August 2001 and he went 7-1 down the stretch to help the Cardinals win the NL Central.

He had a 2.53 ERA in 17 starts in 2002, then went 18-9 with a 3.87 ERA in 2003.

Giants' Schmidt honored in Players Choice Awards

SAN FRANCISCO — Jason Schmidt might have lost his chance at the NL Cy Young Award when he strained his groin covering first base back in August.

But the San Francisco Giants' ace won another coveted honor Thursday, chosen by his peers as the league's outstanding pitcher as part of baseball's 2004 Players

Choice Awards.

Teammate Barry Bonds was named player of the year in the National League, his record seventh Players Choice Award since their inception in 1992.

Bonds finished his 19th major league season with 703 homers, pulling within 11 of Babe Ruth for second place on the career list.

In other awards, Seattle outfielder Ichiro Suzuki, who broke baseball's single-season hits record with 262, was selected as the AL player of the year. Minnesota left Johan Santana was the league's outstanding pitcher.

Oakland Athletics shortstop Bobby Crosby was the top AL rookie, while Jason Bay of the Pittsburgh Pirates took the NL award.

New York Yankees pitcher Orlando Hernandez was the comeback player of the year in the AL, and St. Louis right-hander Chris Carpenter won the NL honor.

Philadelphia Phillies first baseman Jim Thome won the Marvin Miller Man of the Year Award for inspirational performance on the field and in the community.

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Venus survives challenge in Philly

The Associated Press

VILLANOVA, Pa. — Venus Williams needed a third-set tiebreaker to defeat 87th-ranked Yuliana Fedak, 6-4, 2-6, 7-6 (7-4) in the second round of the Advanta Tennis Championships on Thursday night.

Sports briefs

Fifth seed, left 5-4 in the first set but Fedek fought off six set points before losing on the game's eighth deuce.

Fedek easily won the second set and opened 3-1 lead in the third, but Williams fought back for a 5-4 lead.

She rallied from 4-2 down in the tiebreaker.

"Girls like her come out and have nothing to lose so they go for broke," Williams said. "I don't know if anyone else I'll play in this tournament will play at this high a level."

Defending champion and No. 1 seed Anastasia Mauresmo advanced to the quarterfinals by defeating Iveta Benesova 6-2, 6-2.

Second-seeded Anastasia Myskina struggled but held off Beat Rossana Neffa-Di Los Rios 6-4, 7-6 (7-4).

For the second straight match, sixth-seeded Vera Zvonareva was pushed to the brink before beating her opponent, Nathalie Dechy, 2-6, 6-3, 6-4.

Stapenak, Canas reach semis in Paris Masters

PARIS — Radak Stepanak beat Mikhail Youzhny 7-6 (7-1), 6-3 to reach the semifinals of the Paris Masters on Friday and secure his best result of the season.

Thirteenth-seeded Argentine Guillermo Canas won his quarterfinal match, cruising past Spanish Federico Lopez 6-3, 6-3 in the Bercy Indoor Arena.

Lopez will meet the winner of the match between 20 Lleyton Hewitt and No. 6 Marat Safin.

Mississippi State's Roberts to sit out one basketball game

STARKVILLE, Miss. — Mississippi State basketball star Lawrence Roberts must sit out one game for accepting — and later repaying — expenses for a pre-NBA draft workout.

Roberts, who attended a Portland Trail Blazers workout before deciding to return to school, will miss the Bulldogs' game Nov. 11 against Fairfield in the Coaches vs. Cancer Classic in Birmingham, Ala., the NCAA said Friday. Roberts, the Southeastern Conference's player of the year last season, averaged 16.9 points and 10.1 rebounds for the Bulldogs, who won the league's regular-season title and played in the NCAA tournament. The forward applied for entry into this summer's NBA Draft but did not hire an agent. Roberts was transferred from Mississippi State last season from Baylor after the death of teammate Patrick Denney.



Yuliana Fedak of Ukraine (above), ranked 87th in the world, lost to Venus Williams 6-4, 2-6, 7-6 (4) in the Advanta Championships on Thursday night.

Cleveland State cleared NCAA investigation

CLEVELAND — The NCAA has ruled that it found no evidence of Cleveland State athletic department officials writing papers for members of the men's basketball team, the university said Thursday.

Cleveland State reported two secondary violations that occurred between 1997 and 2001. The university did not state what the violations were. They did not involve academics or current members of the coaching staff, athletic department spokesman Brian McCann said.

Ken McCadden, the university's career scoring leader, had accused an athletic department official of helping players write papers.

McCadden, who scored 2,256 points for the Vikings from 1985-89, told The Deal Dealer in September that associate athletic director Chris Sedlock had written numerous papers for players. McCadden was fired after five years as Cleveland State's ticket manager in June 2003.

The NCAA determined that Cleveland State officials had not provided any inappropriate educational assistance to players.

Vermont hoops coach to retire at end of season

BURLINGTON, Vt. — Tom Brennan, who led Vermont to the past two NCAA tournaments, will retire at the end of the season, his 19th with the Catamounts.

Brennan's 18-year tenure is the longest of the current coaches in the America East Conference. He has a 239-269 record. The Catamounts won the league tournament the past two years.

Officials try to persuade Turin chief organizer to stay

ROME — Government officials are trying to persuade the chief organizer of the 2006 Turin Olympics to stay, but Valentino Castellani says there is "no room for second thoughts" about his resignation.

Castellani announced Thursday that he will submit his resignation in a Nov. 24 board meeting of the organizing committee known as TOROC, saying he has been transferred by the government's selection of Mario Piccinini as overall supervisor for the Feb. 10-26, 2006, Games.

Push to victory in Austin

Winner of Benson-Morency matchup key to outcome of Texas-Oklahoma State game

BY JIMMY BURCH

Knight Ridder Newspapers

AUSTIN, Texas — Texas coach Mack Brown has had an eerie feeling this week while breaking down videotapes with his defensive assistants. Play after play, he's struck by the dominance of orange-talented offensive linemen and the relentless tailback who follows them to daylight.

It's the same sensation Brown gets while watching his offense in action.

But in these sessions, Brown is not reveling in the productivity of tailback Cedric Benson and a Longhorns ground attack that ranks second nationally in rushing (304.8 yards per game). He's trying to figure out how to put the brakes on Oklahoma State's tailback Vernand Morency, the nation's No. 5 rusher, and an offense that runs for 254.5 yards a game.

"If you look at what they're doing and what we're doing, it's very, very similar," Brown said of the two offenses that will collide Saturday when No. 6 Texas (7-1, 4-1 Big 12) meets No. 19 Oklahoma State (6-2, 3-2) at Darrell K. Royal-Texas Memorial Stadium.

"The two tailbacks are among the leading rushers in the nation. They've got the ability to run at quarterback. We're both very physical up front and throw a lot of play-action passes. We've got big, strong fullbacks and good tight ends."

"But there is one clear difference," Oklahoma State coach Les Miles said. "The orange in the Cowboys' jerseys, Miles said, is 'a little more vivid' and "not as burnt" as the tights that Texas will wear.

Otherwise, Miles concurs with Brown's analogy about mirror-image offenses. Although there are minor differences in approach — Oklahoma State favors the power sweep and isolation plays, Texas leans heavily on the



Oklahoma State's Vernand Morency is fifth in Division I-A with a rushing average of 155.8 yards.

zone read from the shotgun formation — there is little statistical separation between ground-based attacks that rank 15th and 17th nationally in scoring offense, with six-tenths of a point separating their weekly outputs.

Among the nation's 117 Division I-A teams, Oklahoma State and Texas rank among the top 10 in rushing yards and the bottom 10 in passing yards.

The schools' average possession times for a game are separated by 10 seconds, with the slight edge to Oklahoma State (32:12).

Clearly, there should be ample familiarity for the Texas defense Saturday when it tries to slow a run-first offense that looks a lot like the one it faces in practice each day. But there is disagreement among Longhorns defenders about how much of an advantage that provides.

"We're used to seeing it, but it's different people doing it (in games). I don't think we really gain that much," Texas free safety Phillip Geiggar said.

Morency, in the estimation of Texas defenders, is a lot like Ben-

son: a punishing, physical runner who does not fear running between the tackles. Woods, however, does not present the same running threat as his counterpart Vince Young (69.6 yards per game, 7 TDs).

"I don't know it," Wright said.

That means the Longhorns can focus on stopping Morency first and foremost — a luxury they did not enjoy when trying to contain Oklahoma tailback Adrian Peterson, who romped for 225 yards in the Sooners' 12-0 victory Oct. 9. In that contest, Brown said, Oklahoma's balanced attack forced Texas to choose between stopping the run or pass. Texas opted to try to contain quarterback Jason White, and it's empty, for just 113 yards. But Peterson had a big day.

Against Oklahoma State, Brown said Texas will have "a totally different thought process."

"When somebody's coming into a game against us, they know they've got to stop Vince and Cedric. And they'll give up some passing yards to do that," Brown said. "When you're playing Oklahoma State, it's the same thing. You have to stop the run first."

Wisconsin tries to recapture axe

BY ARNIE STAPLETON

The Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. — Minnesota coach Glen Mason will get a first-hand look Saturday at the guy who got away.

John Stocco, the starting quarterback for No. 5 Wisconsin, is from Richfield, Minn., and he strongly considered staying in the Twin Cities for his college career.

Stocco, a three-sport star who was drafted in 2002 by the Minnesota Twins, played at Richfield's Academy of Holy Spirit, where he threw passes to former Pitts-burgh All-American Larry Fitzgerald for two seasons.

"We tried to recruit him," Mason said. "I really thought we'd have a good shot because he's also a baseball player and we play baseball here, good baseball

here, and they don't play baseball. I guess baseball isn't that important to him. But he's a good kid, local kid. I knew he'd be a good quarterback."

Stocco preferred playing in front of 80,000 fans outdoors in instead of 30,000 indoors and throwing footballs instead of fastballs.

"My decision really came down to here and Minnesota. Ultimately, I just thought this was a better fit for me, just with the academics and the tradition here," Stocco said. "You've just got to go where you feel comfortable. I liked it here more."

Stocco redshirted in 2002 and played in the final three games last season before winning the starting job in the spring.

On Saturday, he and the Badgers will try to wrest the Paul Bu-

rynn Axe — which goes to the annual winner of the most-played rivalry in Division I football — from the Gophers.

"We built a trophy case for that axe and it's empty, and that's not good," Wisconsin coach Barry Alvarez said.

The Badgers seek their eighth victory in 10 games against Minnesota, but the Gophers won the trophy last year when Rhys Lloyd followed his last-second 35-yard field goal with a sprint to the Wisconsin sideline to grab the axe and parade it around the Metrodome.

The Badgers (8-0, 5-0 Big Ten) hope to hand the Gophers (6-3, 3-3) their fourth loss in five games. It's the 114th game between the schools.

Badgers defensive end Erasmus James, who sprained his ankle two weeks ago, said he's determined to return to the lineup.

Singh just two back in Tour Championship

The Associated Press

ATLANTA — The leaves have transformed into a sparkling array of colors. There's a chill in the air. The golf season is coming to a close.

Vijay Singh just loves this time of year.

When his rivals already are looking ahead to the offseason, the world's No. 1 player refuses to let up. He's still playing just like it's the middle of summer.

"For a lot of guys out here, after the PGA (Championship), they kind of slow down," Singh said Thursday, standing just off the 18th green after the opening round of the Tour Championship. "My focus does not get any less after the PGA. If anything, it gets stronger."

The hardy encouraging news to the rest of the elite field at the season-ending Tour Championship, all given the task of denying Singh his 10th victory of the year.

As usual, the Fijian is right in the thick of things, shooting a 1-under 69 on a soggy, blustery first day at East Lake Golf Club. Despite going 15 holes without a birdie, Singh recovered from enough missed shots to finish the round just two strokes behind Darren Clarke, Jerry Kelly and 50-year-old Jay Haas — all seeking their first win of the year.

"It was a day where you just have to manage yourself, get around, not get too far from the lead," Singh said. "I'm right in



Vijay Singh hits from the first hole during the Tour Championship on Thursday in Atlanta. Singh shot a 69, two strokes off the lead.

there, and there's three days to go."

At the first hole, Singh fired his approach into 2 feet for a tap-in birdie. He took bogey on the fourth hole from a fairway bunker and would have been happy with an even-par round.

But Singh rolled in a 25-footer for birdie on the 17th, and suddenly his name was where it has been all year — near the top of the leader board.

With nine victories already, he's his himself in position to become the first player since 1950 to reach double digits. He's not letting up either, heading straight to the driving range after he finished his round.

"I do a lot of thinking on the

driving range," Singh said.

"When I get on the golf course, it's all just play."

Tiger Woods hasn't done much playing since he got married in early October. Returning from a monthlong honeymoon, he still had trouble hitting a fairway, struggling to a 72.

"A little rusty, no doubt about that," Woods said, assessing the state of his mind. "No physical rust. I just made some mental mistakes where I needed to place the ball."

Woods played alongside Ernie Els, who broke his putter while slamming an 8-iron into his bag and finished the round putting with his sand wedge. He also had a 72.

NFL injury update

Injuries to prominent NFL players, followed by team's prognosis. (See Friday's edition for complete injury report provided by the league.)

WRs: WR Josh Reed (knee) and CB Troy Vincent (knee) expected to miss Sunday's game.

Bears: DE Adewale Ogunleye (ankle) did not practice Thursday, questionable for Sunday.

Jets: LB Sam Corcoran (knee) listed as probable; will be game-time decision.

MRI shows slight tear in Moss' hamstring

The Associated Press

EDEEN PRAIRIE, Minn. — Minnesota Vikings wide receiver Randy Moss had an MRI Thursday on his ailing right hamstring, his first such check since he was injured last month.

Moss has a slight tear in the hamstring, which likely will keep him below full speed for three to four more weeks. He has appeared briefly in the last two games — though he hasn't caught a pass.

Moss is listed as questionable for Monday night's game at Indianapolis, and coach Mike Tice said he won't announce his decision until right before kickoff.

Linebacker Raonnell Smith will miss the game due to lingering effects from a concussion.

Smith, who has started three of the Vikings' last four games in place of the injured Chris Claiborne, was hurt on the opening kickoff of last week's loss to the New York Giants. He had a mild concussion Oct. 24 against Tennessee.

Rookie Dontarrious Thomas, who has split time between middle and outside linebacker this season, will start

Monday night. Claiborne will miss at least another week with a strained calf.

Meanwhile, running back Mewelde Moore might miss the game with a sprained left ankle.

That would make the starter either Michael Bennett or Onterio Smith, who is just back from a four-game suspension. Moore leads the team with 64 carries for 376 yards.

Eagles extend Brown's contract

PHILADELPHIA — Sheldon Brown signed a six-year extension with Philadelphia on Thursday, keeping the second-year cornerback with the Eagles through the 2012 season. "The most important part is that I'm glad the Eagles believe in me, an organization that drafted me and gave me a chance to pursue my NFL career," Brown said. "Now I'm more than anxious to prove that I can be worthy of the signing."

Brown received a \$7.5 million signing bonus and the contract is worth \$30 million over the six seasons, agent Jason Chayot told The Associated Press.

Brown, a second-round pick in 2002, and Lito Sheppard, a first-round pick that year, have developed into a formidable duo in their first season as full-time starters, helping the Eagles

to a 7-0 start.

Brown is in his first season as a starter after playing in Philadelphia's nickel and dime defensive packages over the last two seasons. In 39 career games (10 starts), he has four sacks, three interceptions and 107 tackles.

Entering the season, the main question on Philadelphia's defense was how well Sheppard and Brown could fill the void left by Troy Vincent and Bobby Taylor, who both left through free agency.

Sheppard and Brown, both generally listed as 5-foot-10, are shorter and smaller than Vincent and Taylor, but their size hasn't been a factor. They held Amani Toomer and Eli Hillard to seven catches combined in the opener and allowed Randy Moss just 69 yards a week later.

Last week, the Eagles signed wide receiver Greg Lewis to a five-year extension through the 2011 season. By signing Lewis and Brown, the Eagles can assign some of the money to this year's salary cap, freeing up room for the 2005 season.

"I wasn't making putts. I figured I might as well use the sand wedge," Els said, smiling. "That didn't work, either."

The 67 was the highest score to lead the Tour Championship in the four years it has been held at East Lake. Only 13 players among the top 31 on the money list managed to break par in the season-ending event.

The scores weren't surprising.

The day began with heavy rain that turned fairways into small rivers, but a new drainage system at East Lake allowed the tournament to start on time. It dried up so well that top officials decided to play the ball as it lies, leaving players to face several shots with mud splattered on their golf balls.

Then came the wind, whistling through the trees and making the closing holes play even tougher. Perhaps it was no coincidence that the trio in the lead had the earlier starting times.

David Tom and Zach Johnson were one stroke back at 68, while the Singh-led group at 69 also included John Daly, Mike Weir and Padraig Harrington.

A victory by Harrington would make him a PGA Tour member and send Tag Ridings — No. 125 on the money list — back to Q-school. It also would knock Jesper Parnevik (No. 40) out of the Masters.

Haas hasn't won in 11 years, though he wouldn't trade this season. At an age when most players join the old-timers tour, he made the U.S. Ryder Cup team.

"I'm weak, short, slow, whatever," Haas said. "In the field of all athletes, I would not be the favorite

by any means. But there's no defense there, so that's the good thing for me."

Sorenstam shares lead

OTSU, Japan — Annika Sorenstam started her quest for a fourth consecutive Mizuno Classic title with an eagle Friday and held a share of the lead after the first round.

The top-ranked Swede carded a 63 and was tied with Japan's Chihiro Nakajima at 9-under at the \$1 million PGA Tour event.

Sorenstam opened with an eagle at the par-5 first and had seven birdies in a bogey-free round, while Nakajima fired a 30 on the back nine — including six birdies.

The pair was three strokes ahead of Rachel Teske and Aree Song at 66.

Laura Davies, Karrie Webb, South Korean Grace Park and Han Hee-won and Mexico's Lorena Ochoa were one stroke further back at 5-under 67.

Sorenstam, who has six LPGA Tour titles this year, was Mizuno Classic champion in 2001 and 2002 and outlasted the field here last November, winning by nine strokes after setting an LPGA record for the lowest 54-hole score with a 192.

Only Laura Davies has won the same LPGA Tour event in four consecutive years, winning the 2001 Register Ping title from 1994-97.

Sorenstam won the Michelob Light Classic from 1997-99 and placed 17th when she tried to make it four consecutive titles in 2000.

Brees: Chargers not sure of QB's future

BREES, FROM BACK PAGE

Flutie, the 42-year-old third-stringer, said Brees is more confident and decisive.

"But he's the same quarterback," Flutie said. "It's like we are a better football team. Guys are actually open. It's given him the opportunity to show his ability, where the last couple years, it's been tough sledding."

Since Brees turned it on, there hasn't been much talk about the Chargers firing coach Marty Schottenheimer, who has a year to go on his contract, or Smith.

And Brees could be helping owner Alex Spanos save millions of dollars if the Chargers' first-round pick next April is lower than their usual top-five choice. The Giants, who owe the Chargers their first-round pick as part of the QB swap, are probably making Spanos happy, too, by starting out 5-2.

The Chargers could designate Brees as their franchise player, but that would require paying him about \$9 million next year.

Coupled with Rivers' salary of just under \$3 million, that would probably be unlikely.

"Obviously, Phil Rivers was drafted to play," left tackle Roman Oben said. "But Drew is only in his fourth year, he's only 25 years old. He has a lot of good football ahead of him, and wherever he's heading, it's a nice place."

It's more likely Brees is setting himself up for a nice free-agent contract.

The Chargers aren't saying what they'll do with Brees at season's end, and they really don't have to right now. "I have steadfastly said that I think Drew Brees is a good quarterback and can be a winning quarterback," Schottenheimer said.

It just might not be here for much longer.

"I'm going to be in the future somewhere," said Brees, who understands the business side of the NFL. "I hope it's here. If it's not, it'll be somewhere."

SPORTS



Victory on Saturday
critical for Army,
Air Force, Page 26



Refreshing Brees

Renewed confidence helps Chargers' QB lead turnaround

BY BERNIE WILSON

The Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — The San Diego Chargers sold Drew Brees down the river and ended up with a Rivers.

Their quarterback depth chart included a guy over 40 and another one named Lemon, yet it was Brees who was considered washed up and damaged goods. The one-time Purdue star was so far out of the picture in the offseason that it'd be hard to find him even with the telescope at the Palomar Observatory.

Look at him now.

Playing behind a better line, and throwing to better receivers, he's passing with an authority not seen here since the days of Dan Fouts. In leading the high-scoring Chargers in the direction of a rare playoff appearance, Brees might be saving everyone's job but his own.

In an incredible turnaround, the Chargers can't get enough of Brees. He's led them to a 5-3 record by throwing 14 touchdown passes and just three interceptions. His passer rating of 106.8 is third best in the NFL.

Last week he threw a career-high five touchdown passes in a 42-14 rout of the Oakland Raiders. No Chargers QB has done that since Fouts in 1982.

He completed 88 percent of his passes (22-for-25). No Chargers QB had done that, period.

And his passer rating of 153.1 was just under a perfect 158.3.

"We all trust Drew," tight end Antonio Gates said. "Right now, he's the captain of the ship. He's making this offense click."

The good ship Charger can't sail without a Brees. For this season, at least.

Even if Brees leads the Chargers to the playoffs — which they've missed for eight straight years — it's doubtful he'll be back. Not with Philip Rivers sitting at No. 2 on

the depth chart, with all his promise as a first-round draft pick and that \$40 million contract.

Brees, the one-time quarterback of the future, drafted by San Diego along with star running back LaDainian Tomlinson in 2001, is probably past the point of no return.

"I have no idea what the chances of me being here next year are," said Brees, who's in the final year of his four-year contract. "All I know is we've got a chance to do something special this year, and I'm excited about that. I mean, for me right now, it's about winning football games. It's about nothing else."

The Chargers won just four games last year, and Brees' inconsistent play made him the easy scapegoat. He threw 15 interceptions and just 11 touchdown passes, was benched for five straight games and yanked from two others.

"I could turn on the

film and watch myself last year and say, 'That's not me. That's not the way I play,'" Brees said.

In fairness, everyone but Tomlinson had a bad season. The defense was brutal and the Chargers were usu-

ally playing from behind.

Brees never meshed with troubled wideout David Boston, and defensive end Marcus Wilely openly called for Doug Flutie to replace Brees. Boston and Wilely are gone.

"Every-

one's mak-

ing plays for him now, where last year I don't think we were making the plays where we needed to, and he was taking a lot of the heat," tight end Justin Peelle said.

With the Chargers holding the first pick in last April's draft, general manager A.J. Smith said the team needed to "upgrade" at quarterback.

The front office went on a well-publicized quarterback tour, visiting Eli Manning, Ben Roethlisberger and Rivers.

Rivers became a Charger on draft day, obtained along with a handful of draft picks from the New York Giants for Manning, who had told the Chargers he wanted nothing to do with them.

Brees was disappointed for about a week, then got motivated to keep his job.

"My personality has always been take a negative and turn it into a positive," Brees said. "It's only going to make me a better player. And once I do become the starter — because in my mind I've already got it made up that I'm going to become the starter — everybody in this locker room is going to know that I've earned it. So I said, 'Hey, this could be a good situation.'"

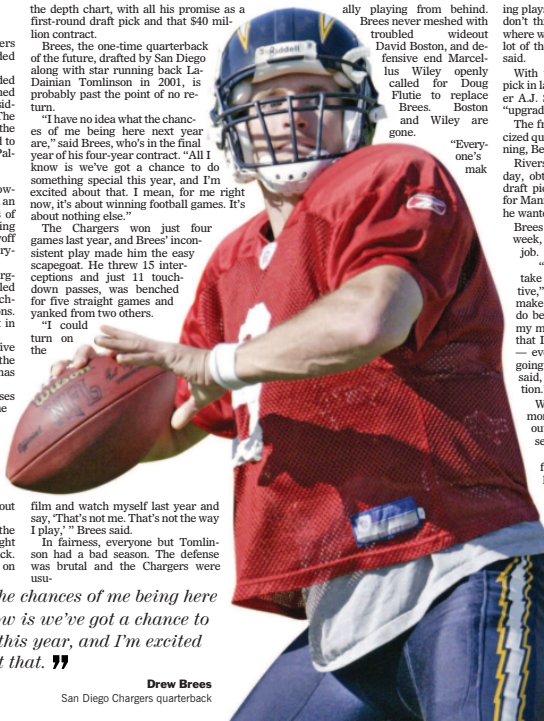
While Rivers missed the first month of training camp in a hold-out, Brees had a solid exhibition season and kept his job.

Rivers was later promoted from third string to second, but has yet to make a snap.

SEE BRES ON PAGE 31

San Diego Chargers quarterback Drew Brees looks downfield during drills at practice Thursday in San Diego. Brees, who was supposed to be replaced this season by top draft pick Philip Rivers, is the No. 3 quarterback in the league and has led the Chargers to the top of the AFC West.

AP



Drew Brees

San Diego Chargers quarterback

"I have no idea what the chances of me being here next year are. All I know is we've got a chance to do something special this year, and I'm excited about that."

No. 14 Louisville hangs on for win against scrappy Memphis

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Wizards spoil NBA's return to Charlotte with victory over Bobcats

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Diamondbacks fire new general manager Backman after discovering past legal troubles

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